

Monday March 4 1996

Alex Doherty 0.8.90	Hong Kong HNS 25	Poland 2.5.70
Albania 1.200	Hungary F 200	Portugal E 200
Andorra 1.100	India Ru 50	Russia R 100
Australia AS 20	Japan Y 100	Saudi Arabia SR 2.00
Bahamas B 100	South Korea W 100	Slovenia S 100
Bahrain B 100	Taiwan NT 100	Slovakia SK 50
Belgium B 100	Thailand TH 100	Slovenia SL 200
Belize B 100	Turkey TL 100.000	Spain P 100
Bolivia B 100	USA US 2.75	Sweden SK 10
Bosnia B 100	Yugoslavia D 100	Switzerland SF 3
Brazil B 100	Denmark DK 100	Thailand TH 100
Canada C 100	France F 100	Thailand TH 100
Czech Republic KC 45	Germany DM 3.50	Thailand TH 100
Cyprus C 100	Italy L 100	Thailand TH 100
Dominican Republic DR 100	Japan Y 100	Thailand TH 100
Ecuador E 100	South Korea W 100	Thailand TH 100
Egypt E 100	Taiwan NT 100	Thailand TH 100
Finland F 100	Thailand TH 100	Thailand TH 100
France F 100	USA US 2.75	Thailand TH 100
Germany DM 3.50	Yugoslavia D 100	Thailand TH 100
Greece G 100	Denmark DK 100	Thailand TH 100

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Richard Williams does a lap of honour

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'Mirror-image' suicide attack kills 18, dealing blow to Peres and putting peace process in doubt

Bomb horror rocks Israel

David Hudson and Jessica Berry in Jerusalem

A DEVASTATING suicide bomb has killed 18 people on a Jerusalem bus in a repeat performance of last week's carnage which may wreck the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

"This is total war," Israel's prime minister, Shimon Peres, declared, announcing a series of draconian measures after emergency consultation with his security chiefs.

He said the Israeli cabinet had decided "to give this war the highest and most unequivocal priority — all that we have in men, ideas and means..."

President Yasser Arafat announced in Gaza that he was outlawing the military wings of Hamas and of the Islamic Jihad organisation.

The militant Hamas group said one of its "martyrs" blew himself up, on the same bus route, on the same street and at almost the same time as the previous Sunday's attack, which killed 25 people.

Yesterday's attack was one of equal horror. Bodies and body parts lay strewn among the burnt-out metal shell of the bus. Observant Jews began to pick up the pieces in an attempt to identify the dead. The body of the bomber, found among the wreckage, was, according to one Palestinian security official, from Israeli-controlled Hebron.

At least four of the dead were Romanian labourers brought in to replace Arabs prevented from crossing to Israel after previous attacks.

One witness, shopkeeper Shabtai Levy, described the scene to journalists: "I saw the driver lying over the wheel and a woman without legs behind the driver. I didn't help her off — I was afraid that there was another bomb... There were parts of bodies everywhere. One body went rolling down the street."

A Hamas statement said: "The cells of the engineer Yehiya Ayyash declare our responsibility for the martyr attack... With this attack, we have added our response to the martyrdom of The Engineer."

The Hamas bombmaker known as "The Engineer" was killed in January by a booby-trapped mobile telephone. His death was almost certainly the work of Israeli agents.

The bombings are a severe blow to the Labour-led government, which faces a general election at the end of May. Last week's twin suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Ashkelon, which killed 26 people, had wiped out the comfortable lead Mr Peres enjoyed in the polls over his hardline Likud opponents.

But yesterday, when he visited the scene of the bombing, Mr Peres was angrily jeered.

After previous attacks, Israeli leaders had always proclaimed defiantly that they would not reward the militants by allowing them to destroy the peace process. This time Mr Peres was non-committal about its future.

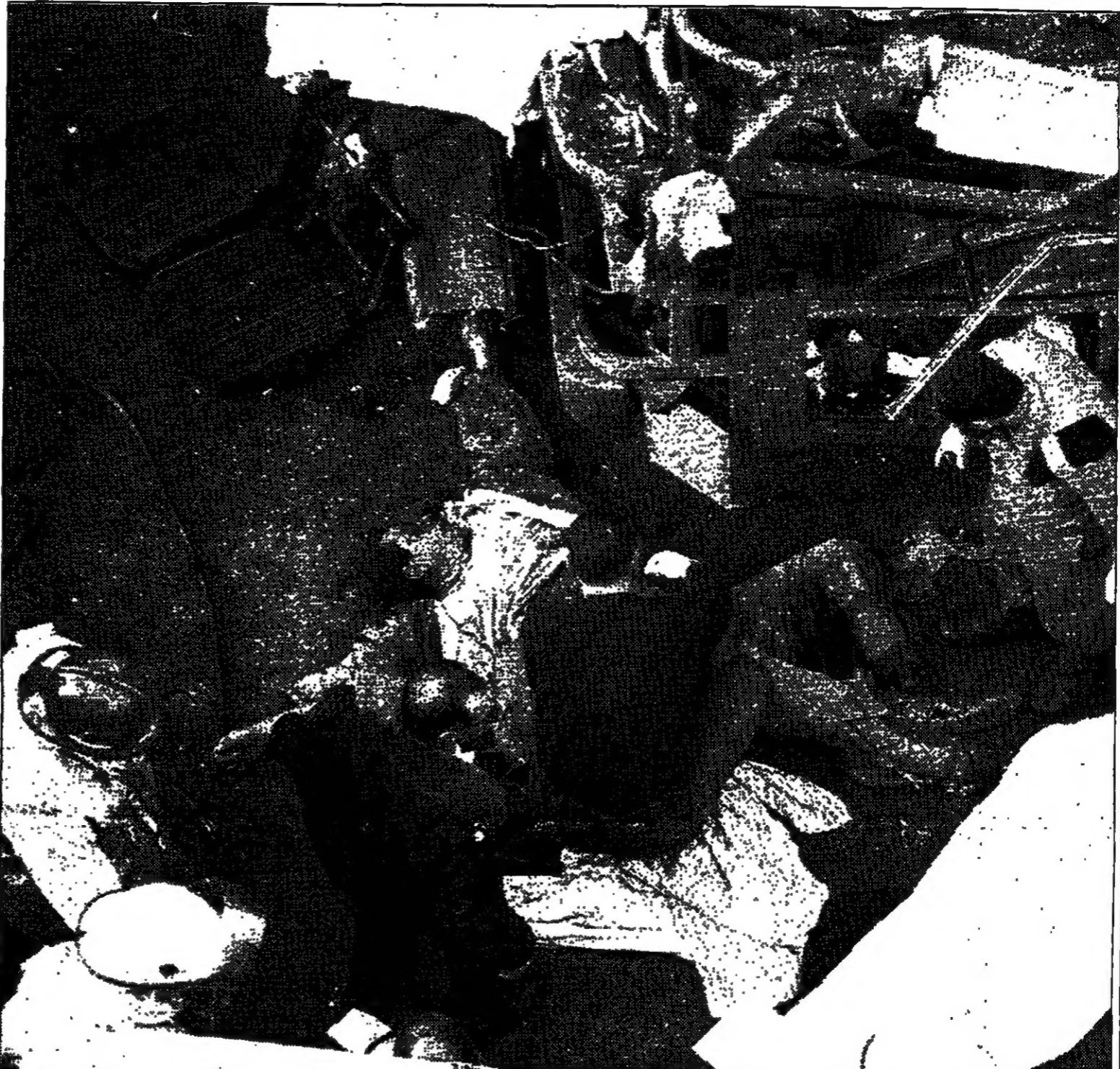
The tough new security measures include sealing and blowing up of homes of families of suicide bombers, deploying hundreds of additional troops and police in Jerusalem and at bus stops around the country, and the blanket closure of the West Bank and Gaza from Israel.

Mr Peres also announced gradual implementation of a policy of total separation of Palestinian territory from Israel. Checkpoints would be set up all along the border with the West Bank.

Mr Peres also made plain that he expects Mr Arafat's Palestinian police to act even more firmly against the militants. More than 200 Hamas members had been arrested after last week's bombing.

Asked if this might mean Israeli troops going back into Gaza and West Bank towns under Palestinian control, Israeli's chief military commander, Lieutenant General Amnon Shahak, said: "We would much prefer the Palestinian police to do what is necessary. But if they do not do what has to be done, then someone else will have to."

Mr Peres sidestepped questions on the peace process. "We are honouring the agreement and we will continue to honour it provided the Palestinian Authority honours its side." His cause was not helped yesterday when President Ezer Weizman called for a halt to the peace talks and a suspension of the elections.



Carnage... Rescue workers examine the body of a victim of yesterday's suicide bus bomb in Jerusalem which killed 19

PHOTOGRAPH BY EYAL WASHAWANSKY

Right claims win in Spain

John Hooper and Adela Gooch in Madrid

BESMIRCHED by scandal and wearied by more than 13 eventful years in government, Spain's Socialists were last night forecast to be heading for defeat by the right. On the basis of exit polls which all showed the conservative Popular Party close to a majority, the PP's party secretary, Mariano Rajoy, claimed victory.

However, officials reported a late surge in turnout which was thought to have benefited the left and which was not reflected in the pollsters' calculations. Early results gave the Socialists a slight lead.

"The important fact is that the Popular Party will rule in Spain for the next four years," he said.

The exit polls indicated that the PP under José María had won a victory. However, none gave the conservatives an outright majority in the key, lower house of the Cortes (parliament).

All but one reckoned the PP had won enough seats to allow Mr Aznar to govern in minority or with the help of some of the smaller regional parties. They put the PP's share of the vote at 40-41 per cent, with the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party taking 34-35 per cent.

A crowd outside the PP's headquarters in central Madrid cheered and waved national flags as polling closed, shouting "Aznar for premier."

Party workers gave thumbs up signs from the windows, but Mr Aznar and most of his senior aides remained inside waiting for the pollsters' predictions to be confirmed.

The conservative leader had declared a hard right agenda, promising Spaniards clean government and economic recovery. Job creation became a key issue. Spain, with more than one in five out of work, has the European turn to page 2, column 7

United by corruption, page 6

2.2m HK Chinese to get no-visa access to Britain

Rebecca Smithers in Hong Kong

JOHAN Major will announce today visa-free travel to Britain for some 2.2 million Hong Kong Chinese in a wide-ranging speech designed to calm their growing fears about the future of the colony after its handover to China next year.

Mr Major has been under pressure to tackle the increasingly sensitive issue, which Governor Chris Patten described yesterday as "the single most important decision that the Government still has to make about Hong Kong."

There has been widespread speculation after Mr Major's meeting with the European premier, Lee Peng, at the Europe-Asia summit in Bangkok last week that concessions were imminent, but the announcement is being timed to make maximum impact ahead of Mr Major's departure from the colony today.

Mr Major will brief a closed session of the legislative council, the LegCo, and then make what is expected to be his most important speech on the colony's future when he attends a lunch for Hong Kong and Chinese business people.

Visa-free travel is considered critical in Hong Kong if it is to remain an economic success and retain its position as an international financial and trade centre.

Despite realisation from the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, the Government has changed its position to avoid the Chinese retaliating by restricting the access of British citizens to Hong Kong.

The concession will apply to the 2.2 million Hong Kong

Enter the Dragon

As Prime Minister John Major makes his final visit to Hong Kong before China's takeover, the Guardian team kicks off a week of exclusive reports. Will Hutton details in an economics page special on page 11 how the reality of the colony's economic success is far removed from the free-market myth, while in a G2 cover story Andrew Higgins analyses where the power and money lie in the last days of the British Empire.

Throughout the week, Guardian writers will assess what 1997 will mean for the colony's economy and its people.

Plus Alex Brummer interviews governor Chris Patten.

Peter Pan producers sued over the boy who wouldn't look up

Martin Wainwright

IKE a pirate from Never-Lover Land, the power of J.M. Barrie's original Peter Pan has reached out from a theatre stage to throttle recent, saccharine versions — unfortunately scaring a three-year-old witness in the process.

The parents of terrified Morris Mitchener, who tried to hide under a seat and his Dad's coat as the tale of child kidnaps, plank-walking and the relentless croc unfolded, are taking legal action over his "stress and trauma".

Born in an era of sanitised Pete 'n' Wendy cartoon escapades, where moppy kids outfit an avuncular Cap'n Hook plus grinning reptile, Morris was not prepared for the real, dark and gripping thing. Although armed with his plastic sword and senior cousin Chloe, who is six, he started sobbing "Get me out, get me out!" within minutes of the curtain going up at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds.

"My own grandson now calls me 'Nasty Granny' for talking him to the theatre," said Morris's grandmother Mavis Buck, of Pontefract, whose 61st birthday treat

prompted the family outing. "I'm distressed that I took him to see something frightening."

Morris's parents Amanda and Mark, of East Bergholt, Suffolk, said Morris suffered nightmares about the play. A black crow's feather costume for Pan, pretend-wolves and an enormous crocodile amounted to "an X-rated horror movie for a child of his age". Mrs Mitchener said: "I'd never seen Peter Pan done like this before. Morris was absolutely petrified."

The family are suing over the Playhouse's lack of advance warning that the play might not be suitable for under-sevens, a message on handbills they only saw 10 minutes before the play. The theatre's house manager, Morag Darby, said that the initial brochure, which tempted the family to spend £85 on tickets last summer, had not included the warning because the production was then at an early stage.

"It is something we will be looking at more closely in future," she said, adding: "We have had heaps of praise from children and grandchildren, and we tried to remain faithful to the original play."



Kong and Chinese business people.

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Despite realisation from the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, the Government has changed its position to avoid the Chinese retaliating by restricting the access of British citizens to Hong Kong.

The concession will apply to the 2.2 million Hong Kong

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Sketch

Generous Major lays it on thick

Rebecca Smithers from Hong Kong



IT WAS a scene that nearly brought a tear to the eye. John Major and a chap from Doncaster symbolically inaugurating the southern runway at Hong Kong's \$12 billion airport, just 18 months before the spanking new project is handed over to China in a final act of British generosity.

After all, by the time the airport (final name still to be decided) opens for business in 1998, the Brits will be out of town. And if you believe the likes of Martin Lee, chairman of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, they will have turned their backs on their former colony to concentrate on building up trade with China.

He claims this is the only thing on Mr Major's and Michael Heseltine's minds, and the reason why Hezza and 250 businessmen will be clocking up the air miles when they visit China in May.

Yesterday, on the island site at Chek Lap Kok, a red flag fluttered proudly above Mr Major as with admirable dexterity he released the lever on the yellow 9.5 tonne roller and steered it over the virgin asphalt on the 3,800 metre airstrip.

Bringing Mr Major on the finer points of asphalt technology yesterday was Peter Wragg, aged 34, who as a specialist in "airfield paving" has apparently travelled the world from his native Doncaster, meeting world leaders on a variety of runways, which are "a booming business" all of their own.

He revealed he had met Hong Kong's governor, Chris Patten — who accompanied the prime minister yesterday — on a runway in Nairobi.

John and Peter looked an unlikely pair, perched high on the machine making history together. Like his predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, who visited the site last year, the besuited Mr Major had refused to don his plastic hard hat. After all, one aide claimed, it had been bad

enough for him having to slip into that dreadful Thai silk shirt and chinos at the Bangkok summit last week.

The most important question for the assembled Hong Kong Chinese hawks was Mr Major's driving. "He was good. He stopped it nice and slow."

Mr Major looked lonely on the lunar landscape and he must have been thinking he had few friends in Hong Kong. After lots of cosy chats over fruity cocktails with his European chums at the Europe-Asia meeting, he had had to fly on to the colony for a visit which has been used by the local press to flag up the thornier issues still to be resolved by the British government. These are, notably, the question of visa-free access, and the future of the legislative council and Bill of Rights.

It is not much fun, for example, knowing you've been dubbed "the loser of the week" in a long-running campaign waged by the South China Morning Post — the largest English language newspaper in Hong Kong, which has allowed the most vociferous critic, Mr Lee, generous access to its pages. Neither can finding that a British Sunday newspaper is claiming you are wooing Hong Kong figures such as Li Ka-shing who are donors to the Conservative Party.

But the last word will come from Mr Major in his parting shots today. After all, this is the last visit expected by a British prime minister while Hong Kong is still in our clutches.

But, back to the airport and just one more question for Mr Major, who earlier went to see the key link in its new transport, the 1.8 kilometre Ma Tsang Tung suspension bridge, which will be the world's longest suspension bridge. In Hong Kong, unlike Britain, it seems, good road and rail links are considered an integral part of a project of the magnitude.

And even with some teething problems over the financing, Hong Kong has been able to see through a huge infrastructure project — the lion's share of it funded by the Government. In just the year from start to finish including reclamation of land. Surely there are some lessons there from which the British could learn?

Dole finds southern comfort in primary win

Landslide win as Republicans unite around Senate leader

Jonathan Freedland in Charleston, South Carolina

BOB DOLE launched into what aides billed as the "home stretch" of his bid for the Republican presidential nomination yesterday, winning a landslide victory in South Carolina in which he finished as the one candidate able to unite the party's warring wings.

The senator at last made real his long-held frontrunner status, beating his nearest challenger, former TV commentator Pat Buchanan, by 16 per cent — a far wider margin than anyone had predicted. Mr Dole drew heavily on moderate and religious conservatives to score 45 per cent to Mr Buchanan's 29 per cent, so winning all 57 of the state's delegates. Publishing magazine Steve Forbes came third with 13 per cent, while former Tennessee governor Lamar Alexander was a poor fourth with 10 per cent.

Such a showing in his home region, following a string of abysmal performances in the last few contests, prompted senior Republicans, including House Speaker Newt Gingrich, to urge Mr Alexander to drop out of the race yesterday. Despite the looming prospect of running out of money, the former governor vowed to go on.

For Mr Dole victory was all the sweeter, with South Carolina traditionally regarded as the Gateway to the South, setting a lead for the rest of the region. Aides are hoping that momentum from Saturday's vote will bring success in tomorrow's primary in Georgia and next week's Super Tuesday contests in the southern states, including vote-rich Florida and Texas.

The result marked an end to a losing streak in important states for Mr Dole, coming after defeats in New Hampshire and Arizona. "This is a big one," Mr Dole told cheering supporters in South Carolina last night. "We have a long road ahead and on and on it goes, but we're on a roll."

Feds also showed Mr Dole leading in nine states which vote in tomorrow's so-called Junior Tuesday batch of contests, mainly concentrated in New England. Strategists are calculating that Mr Dole's moderately liberal message will play well in liberal states like Massachusetts and Vermont — and that the entire region will be anxious to stop the conservative ultra, Pat Buchanan.

The Race

The winners so far	
Louisiana	Feb 16 Buchanan
Iowa	Feb 12 Dole
New Hampshire	Feb 20 Buchanan
Delaware	Feb 24 Forbes
N & S Dakota	Feb 27 Dole
Arizona	Feb 27 Forbes
S Carolina	Mar 2 Dole



Candidate	Bob Dole
Bob Dole	45%
Pat Buchanan	29%
Steve Forbes	13%
Lamar Alexander	10%

The Schedule

- Mar 5: Junior Tuesday
Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Rhode Island & Vermont
- Mar 7: New York
- Mar 12: Super Tuesday
Florida, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah & Wisconsin
- Mar 19: Ohio, Illinois, Michigan & Wisconsin
- Mar 26: California

trated in New England. Strategists are calculating that Mr Dole's moderately liberal message will play well in liberal states like Massachusetts and Vermont — and that the entire region will be anxious to stop the conservative ultra, Pat Buchanan.

He is also helped by the condensed political timetable: with so many races concentrated on single days, candidates can no longer engage in intense personal campaigning in individual states. Instead 45 per cent of them do Mr Buchanan's 16 per cent.

In short, Mr Dole is emerging as a Republican John Major: loved by neither wing of the party, but acceptable to both. Moderates cannot stomach Mr Buchanan, and right-wingers don't trust Mr Alexander. But both can live with Mr Dole. "Only Dole cuts across the party," said political analyst William Schneider yesterday.

Mr Dole was helped in South Carolina, however, by local factors which may not be repeatable in other states. He had the support of Govern-



Thumbs up... Bob Dole peeks round a curtain to gesture to a supporter at a campaign rally in Maine at the weekend before his win in South Carolina. PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT SLUKATY

nor David Beasley — beloved by the Christian Coalition — and the highly popular previous governor, Carroll Campbell. Both men are likely to have earned a place on Mr Dole's shortlist of potential vice-presidential running mates as a result.

Mr Buchanan, meanwhile, may have reached the ceiling of his support. South Carolina, with its tortured history on race, should have been fertile territory for the former speechwriter's rightwing message. Yet despite blatant appeals to old Southern resentments — even supporting the state's right to secede — Mr Buchanan's protectionist stance on trade.

The flight of Christian conservatives, coupled with a statement from the national anti-abortion campaign which declared Mr Dole as acceptable as Mr Buchanan on the issue, could prove a fatal blow.

"We've still got a fighting chance to win this nomination," the hoarse-sounding freshman told a campaign rally in Maine.

He concedes he needs "one big breakthrough" to match his upset triumph in New Hampshire. He has high hopes for the industrial Midwest which votes on March 12. Mr Dole is expected to federate battle flag, viewed by many blacks as a symbol of slavery — Mr Buchanan was rebuffed.

continued from page 1
Union's highest unemployment rate.

The Socialists had tried desperately to tar their rivals with the brush of fascism. Mr Aznar's party was founded by a former minister under the Franco dictatorship. But the prime minister, Felipe González, who often appeared resigned to defeat, was burdened by corruption scandals and a continuing row over whether his government authorised death squads to fight Basque terrorism.

The Socialist's failure to crush the separatist guerrilla group, ETA, was underlined at the start of campaigning when it killed one of the prime minister's closest confidants. Mr González and his wife, Carmen Romero, also a candidate, were the first to cast their votes at a polling station near the prime minister's residence. Mr González was given a noisy reception. Supporters applauded, but several in the crowd jeered and shouted "Out Out."

Spain's most prominent trade unionist, Antonio Gutiérrez, seemed to take a PP

Prescott pledge to buy back Railtrack

Patrick Wintour, Chief Political Correspondent

JOHN PRESCOTT, Labour's deputy leader, yesterday hardened his party's stance on renationalisation of the railways when he guaranteed Labour would bring Railtrack back into public ownership.

If the Government sells all shares in Railtrack, as expected, Labour is likely to propose to convert them into preference shares, avoiding the expense of buying back shares but securing control of the track system. Dividends would still have to be paid to shareholders.

Mr Prescott — who yesterday admitted to initially disliking the word "stakeholding" — did not go into these still confidential details on LWT's Dimbleby programme, but did promise the railways would be publicly owned and accountable, adding that a clause to this effect would be put into Railtrack's sale prospectus due in May. Railtrack must warn potential purchasers of the likelihood of repurchase by Labour.

Mr Prescott's remarks suggest he has won an internal battle to ensure that Labour will not simply seek tight regulation of the railways, as it proposes with the other privatised industries. Labour has already said that on election it will not agree to further train operating services being privatised or agree to the renewal of any private contracts.

Mr Prescott said: "Railways will be publicly owned and publicly accountable, and this will be defined very shortly because that is a public service meeting public need."

"We've said that formula will have to be put into the prospectus for Railtrack, and it will reflect those principles and be consistent with them. Our position will be clear. We will find a formula which fits in with that criterion."

His remarks were echoed by the shadow railways spokesman, Brian Wilson. The pair's declarations of intent are likely to please the railway unions, which have feared Tony Blair would settle for regulation.

The Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, has not yet said whether the Government will sell 100 per cent of Railtrack or only 51 per cent. He has also not ruled out retaining a golden share. Mr Prescott's office insists Labour has plans in place for each of these eventualities.

However, Labour sources expect a full-scale election campaign to be the maximum cash for the Government and pose the maximum political difficulties for Labour.

Review

An exciting music event all round

David Fallows
CSO/Rattle
Birmingham

ALMOST 40 years after its first performance Stockhausen's Gruppen remains one of the supremely exciting works of the orchestral repertoire. The excitement is not just in its difficulty and resources but partly because any performance is in the nature of a festival. Simply finding a room that can accommodate the three orchestras in the right way and leave room for a decent audience in the middle is already a problem.

At Birmingham we were moved from Symphony Hall to a vast exhibition space nearby. As Sir Simon Rattle remarked, it was the size of a small village in Norfolk. And the set-up was beautifully calculated, with ideal spacing of the orchestras, colour-coded shirts for the players and all things considered — an astonishingly good acoustic ambience.

Even so, there were only about 1,000 seats between the orchestras, so the 20-minute work was played twice. Those who had seen the first three were encouraged to go elsewhere for the second. I went up in the balcony, where everything could be seen, but eventually decided that the back of the hall was rather better for sound. It was clear enough that the music loses a lot of im-

port if you are not right in the middle. Not only do you miss the swirling effect of the music moving around the room, but the inexhaustibly inventive detail of the writing can disappear. What does not get lost is the massively strong formal design, purposefully articulated by the three conductors: John Coates who conducted in the first British performance 35 years ago, Rattle, and Daniel Harding.

A few crucial details went astray the first time through, and nobody could be surprised at that when the writing is as intricate. But both times you could hear clearly how all those terrifying details are welded together in a work of the most remarkable restraint: no cheap effects, but a glorious and inexorable musical logic. Firmly held in place, Gruppen will always feel like an uncompromising novelty, but as it approaches middle age it seems increasingly powerful and lucid.

By way of introduction, Rattle and the CSO presented two other towering masterpieces of the same years. Stravinsky's ballet Agon came across as a glittering kaleidoscope held in place by its relatively simple ground piano. And Messiaen's Chronochromie — in some ways his least self-indulgent work, and surely inspired by the growing virtuosity of the young composers around him at the time — simply glowed with its panoply of magical colours.

Loyalist splinter group to renew Ulster attacks

David Sharrock and Patrick Wintour

A SPLIT in loyalist paramilitary ranks has cast a shadow over today's opening round of proximity meetings intended to pave the way for Northern Ireland's all-party talks in June.

Hard-line dissident elements of the two main loyalist groups, the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Ulster Freedom Fighters, announced they were pulling out of the ceasefire. "From today we will execute members of PIRA (Provisional IRA) and Sinn Féin," a spokesman for the breakaway faction told a Belfast newspaper.

It would stop if the IRA declared another ceasefire.

Sinn Féin warned its members and nationalists to be extremely vigilant. The party's Six County Chairperson, Gerry O'Neill, said: "Factions and other premises which have in the past been targeted by loyalists should as a matter of urgency reintroduce security arrangements which might have lapsed in recent times."

The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, said he was very concerned about the claims of a return to violence. "There was a hint of this sort of action several months ago," he said. "The fact that the IRA has broken its ceasefire would be a setback for the peace process."

It makes it more difficult for the Provisionals to renew their ceasefire.

The Rev Roy Magee, the man who helped broker the loyalist ceasefire in the summer of 1994, said he was summoned to a secret meeting with dissident UVF members on Friday evening.

"They indicated there was deep concern particularly with the response by the Prime Minister to the London bombing," he told BBC Radio 4's The World This Weekend. "They said it appeared to them to be obvious that violence still paid. They were concerned about this and they would consider taking action."

Marguerite Duras, cult French writer, dies in Paris

Paul Webster in Paris

MARGUERITE Duras, who died in Paris yesterday aged 81, was internationally recognised as one of the most original writers of this century. She wrote the script for Alain Resnais's classic film, Hiroshima, Mon Amour, in 1959.

She drew largely on romanticised autobiographical material for a dozen sparse novels, another dozen plays and five films.

Spanish right claims poll win

continued from page 1

Doctors said Ms Duras, who had been ill for some years, died of a pulmonary crisis.

Spain's most prominent trade unionist, Antonio Gutiérrez, seemed to take a PP

continued from page 1

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19.9%	£118.10	£5,668.80	12.5%	£206.68	£9,920.64	19.9%	£206.68	£9,920.64
18.9%	£116.33	£5,583.84	16.9%	£197.40	£9,475.20	16.9%	£197.40	£9,475.20
18.7%	£116.00	£5,568.00	17.5%	£199.32	£9,567.36	17.5%	£199.32	£9,567.36

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Shadow Welsh secretary's remarks about Prince of Wales focus attention on republican views within party

Blair forced to confront monarchy debate

Concern over relations between Charles and Labour in office

Patrick Wintour, Chief Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR was under pressure yesterday to allow a free-ranging debate within the Labour Party on the future of the monarchy, as it became clear that the shadow Welsh secretary, Ron Davies, remains an unrepentant republican despite apologising over his remarks about the Prince of Wales last week.

prince in the event of a Labour government, in which Mr Davies is likely to be Welsh secretary.

In other extracts not broadcast, Mr Davies said it would be impossible for Charles to be king if he remained "living in sin" with Camilla Parker-Bowles, and he claimed the prince sometimes used Wales as a weapon in his propaganda war against his wife. He did however stress the affection British people have for the Queen.

A number of Labour MPs, including many Welsh ones — at least 15 of whom are probably republicans, went on record yesterday supporting Mr Davies and demanding a more mature debate in the Labour Party on the monarchy.

They were joined by George Walden, Tory MP for Buckingham, who accused John Major of low-life politics "for trying to score a point from Bangkok when the shadow Welsh secretary gets into a little trouble over the monarchy."



Ron Davies... unrepentant

In a view of sending a message from the Commons telling the Royal Family "that you are actually demeaning yourselves and the country. When you think of all these sordid money deals, all these blabbing lovers, these duchesses and princesses, are we supposed to defer to those people?"

In views echoed by some Labour MPs yesterday, Mr Walden accused Mr Blair of "believing somehow he'll be upsetting the middle classes if any of his troops hinted at the truth."

But the Labour leader's office said Mr Davies had been asked to apologise not only because of the personalised criticisms of the Prince

of Wales, but also because he was bound by shadow cabinet collective responsibility to accept the party's support for the monarchy. Mr Blair's office insisted it was not seeking to stifle a party debate on the future of the monarchy, and regarded the matter as closed.

Mr Davies, who is no fan of New Labour, doubtless knows that even if Mr Blair had wanted to dismiss him — which the Labour leader does not — his position is secure because he came fourth in the shadow cabinet elections last year.

Tony Benn, MP for Chesham, said yesterday: "A couple of weeks ago, in a speech on the constitution, Mr Blair said that hereditary peers should not be allowed to sit in the House of Lords, and what Mr Davies said was that hereditary monarchs should not be heads of state. It's very similar."

But Peter Mandelson, Labour MP for Hartlepool and a key adviser to Mr Blair, insisted that Mr Davies's views were "objectionable" and he was right to apologise.

"To say that the Prince of Wales for all sorts of personal reasons is not fit to be king is something which, on reflection, Ron Davies quite rightly thought was something that he shouldn't have said," Mr Mandelson told Sky TV's Sunday programme.



Cool response... The Prince of Wales takes time out for his watercolour work in Pazy, Switzerland

Diana could face 'gagging clause'

Sally Weale

LAWYERS for the Prince and Princess of Wales are expected to resume contact this week after their highly visible falling-out over the royal divorce settlement, with a proposed confidentiality clause at the top of the agenda of what are likely to be contentious discussions.

The prince's lawyers are said to be determined to secure a "gagging clause" as a condition of the settlement in order to prevent the princess speaking out about their relationship and the royal family in a manner which could further damage the monarchy.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman last night described the notion of a confidentiality clause as "pure speculation", but it is known that officials are desperate to avoid a repetition of the princess's Panorama interview, which was deemed to be deeply harmful to the monarchy.

Lawyers acting for the princess are believed to be drawing up a clause similar to that which formed part of the separation agreement between the Duke and Duchess of York four years ago. Solicitor Fiona Shackleton, who then acted on behalf of the duke, now represents the Prince of Wales.

Should the princess break any such confidentiality agreement, the royal family is unlikely to want to take her to court or seek damages from her. They are more likely to keep her in check by threatening to stop agreed maintenance payments of up to £750,000

a year. The princess's legal team is thought to favour a one-off lump sum payment which would make it almost impossible for the palace to enforce any confidentiality clause. Negotiations are likely to be protracted.

The princess was reported yesterday to have suggested during her 45-minute meeting with Charles on Wednesday that they should appear together on television to announce that they were seeking a divorce. The prince refused.

Writer and broadcaster Jonathan Dimbleby weighs into the royal debate today with an article in the US magazine Newsweek, in which he claims that the prince "plays no part whatsoever" in the War of the Waleses. He describes the prince as "remarkably stoical" and says he is mindful that "his duty is to persevere in the hope that sanity and fairness will one day be restored, and in the knowledge that he will one day be king".

Mr Dimbleby, who elicited a confession of adultery from the prince during his television interview, said in those three "angushed" minutes the prince had said all that he had ever said, or was likely to say, about the breakdown of his marriage.

The mother of the princess, Frances Shand Kydd, said last night there was too much interference for her daughter ever to have made a success of her marriage. "They never got the time or the space they needed to make their marriage work or to sort out their problems."

New Republic advertisement featuring portraits and quotes from various Labour MPs like Paul Flynn, Stuart Bell, Harry Barnes, Roger Berry, and Llewellyn Smith.

FO and Customs officials face writs over arms-to-Iraq trial

Richard Norton-Taylor

SENIOR Customs and Foreign Office officials will today be served with High Court writs alleging conspiracy and abuse of authority in an arms-to-Iraq trial.

The move follows sharp criticism by Sir Richard Scott of the way officials improperly interfered with the course of justice in a Customs prosecution of three men charged with trying to sell 200 Sterling sub machine-guns to Iraq, via Jordan.

In what Sir Richard described as "disgraceful" conduct, the officials conspired in 1985 to persuade staff from the Iraqi and Jordanian embassies in London not to appear as witnesses on behalf of Major Reginald Dunk and Alexander Schlesinger, two arms dealers, and James Edmiston, former owner of the Sterling arms company.

The Scott inquiry heard how Patrick Nixon, a senior FO diplomat, told a colleague, Carsten Pigott: "I confess to innocent reluctance to connive at impeding the course of justice." He was replying to a note sent by Mr Pigott about approaches made to a senior Iraqi embassy official.

Mr Pigott subsequently told the inquiry he did not intend to impede the course of justice and that he was acting "at the behest of the prosecution authority". Sir Richard describes the actions of the FO officials involved as "thoroughly reprehensible", and adds that the behaviour of Customs officials deserved "greater censure". Mr Edmiston was acquitted

by an Old Bailey jury in 1985. Mr Dunk and Mr Schlesinger were fined a total of £23,000 but their convictions were quashed by the Court of Appeal last year in light of the Scott inquiry evidence.

Gavin McFarlane of Titmuss, Sainer, Dechert, lawyers for Mr Edmiston, will today serve writs alleging "conspiracy and mistreatment in public office" against the Customs & Excise Commissioners, the Foreign Office, and Mr Pigott. Mr McFarlane refers in the writ to the appeal court judgement by Lord Taylor, the Lord Chief Justice, who said "the machinations" in the case "constituted such an interference with the justice process as to amount to an abuse of it". Sir Basil Rhodes, lawyer for Mr Dunk, is separately preparing a claim for compensation.

The Crown Prosecution Service has passed papers on the case to the Metropolitan Police, which says investigations are continuing. Officials named in the appeal court judgement and in the Scott report are Mr Nixon, subsequently promoted to high commissioner in Lusaka, Zambia; Patrick Wogan, promoted to ambassador in Doha, Qatar; Mr Pigott, promoted to deputy head of mission in Addis Ababa; and Graham Boyce, head of the FO's environment, science and energy department.

They became involved after an initiative from Customs and Excise. Customs officers named by the appeal court and in the Scott report are Mike Knox, now in charge of the European and International division, and John Casey, a special investigator.

Top sports pledge for terrestrial TV

Andrew Cull Media Correspondent

THE Government is expected to announce tomorrow that mainstream television channels will be guaranteed access to big sports events, despite the growing power of satellite stations.

Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, is understood to have decided that the eight top "listed" events — including the Grand National, FA Cup final and Wimbledon — will be made available on a non-exclusive

basis to terrestrial and satellite broadcasters.

The compromise solution follows a heavy government defeat during the committee stage of the Broadcasting Bill in the House of Lords, when peers insisted satellite stations should be prevented from bidding for the eight events. Their intention, however, was to ensure the events remained accessible to all viewers on mainstream channels. Lord Inglewood, the Broadcasting Minister, who will announce the Government's plan, believes it will satisfy the Lords' concerns. Ministers said the Lords

amendment, sponsored by Lord Howell, the former Labour sports minister, was badly drafted. Because Test matches involving England are on the list, it would have prevented Sky Sports screening overseas tours, even though the BBC does not have airtime to broadcast them.

Under the Government's proposals — following a six-week consultation with broadcasters and sporting authorities — the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and BSkyB would be able to screen any of the listed events non-exclusively. Meanwhile, the Govern-

ment faces a fresh rebellion over sports coverage in the Lords tomorrow, as a cross-party alliance of peers seeks more curbs on satellite stations. An amendment which would force sporting bodies to sell highlights to the BBC or ITV if Sky Sports had the exclusive live rights is to be debated.

The amendment has the backing of the BBC, which argues it would help sports bodies by enabling them to set up a secondary rights market. The Government opposes it, believing it would force sports owners to sell to almost anyone who asks.

first direct advertisement with images of people and text: 06:30 Ian Francis enjoys his breakfast and settles his Visa bill. 11:15 Jake O'Sullivan teases his mother as she asks about her mortgage. 23:30 Bob Sparks wakes with a start and calls to pay his gas bill.

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To advertise in The Guardian please call 0171 239 9735 OK! is not as obsequious to celebs as Hello! 'Intimate' is the word editor Richard Barber chooses carefully, citing OK!'s Christmas feature on actor John Bowe's vasectomy.

4 BRITAIN

Blair adviser defends decision not to send daughter to comprehensive

Labour under fire in new row over school choice

Donald Macleod
Education Correspondent

TONY BLAIR'S senior schools adviser hinted yesterday that he had bowed to pressures from his wife not to send their youngest daughter to a local comprehensive and admitted that the decision was at odds with his role.

Professor Michael Barber, Dean of New Initiatives at London University's Institute of Education, defended his "very difficult" decision and said he expected criticism from some in the Labour Party. The disclosure which led to renewed Tory attacks on alleged Labour hypocrisy comes after Mr Blair sent his son to grant-maintained school and the shadow health spokeswoman Harriet Har-

man chose to send her son to a grammar school. Prof Barber decided not to send 11-year-old Alys to Haggerston Girls school in Hackney, north London — of which he is a governor — "following vigorous debate within the family". The family was considering offers from independent and selective grant-maintained schools.

"My wife and I differ in our views about education and politics," he said. "I respect her views. Having taken this decision as a family, I must take responsibility for it."

His wife had "not been impressed by the education received by one of two older daughters at a London comprehensive school", and was adamant that Alys should get the best opportunity.

Prof Barber said he had offered to resign as a governor

at Haggerston school in Hackney. "I thought my offer would take pressure off the other governors."

He acknowledged that every decision to opt out of the state system — like that which he and his family had taken — made his role in advising Labour on how to "turn round" failing inner-city schools more difficult.

"The goal for policy for state education has to be to make schools good enough to attract parents who simply want the best education for their child. I am aware that the decision we are taking makes that less likely. Every parent that opts out makes the improvement of state comprehensive schools more difficult because it spreads doubt about their quality."

Sir Rhodes Boyson MP, a former education minister and north London comprehensive head teacher, said: "There are now so many Labour politicians and advisers sending their children to grant-maintained or independent schools that they should set up a special school for them and see how it compares with the state system."

Grainan Riddick, MP for Colne Valley and a member of the Commons education select committee, said: "This is another example of the Labour Party and those associated with it taking advantage of Conservative choice in education while at the same time advocating policies that would deny other parents that same choice."

David Blunkett, the shadow education secretary, played down the row as a "non-story". He is not a politician or an MP. He is an individual.

Ashdown wants to end hostility

John Carvel
Education Editor

PADDY Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, intends to drop his party's hostility to private education and recognise the need for independent schools to keep the financial benefits of charitable status.

A policy paper being sent out today to party members endorses "the right of parents to send their children to the school of their choice".

It wants local education authorities to "develop partnerships with independent schools so that their facilities can be opened up to the wider community".

The Liberal Democrats went into the last election questioning independent schools' charitable status which entitled them to tax reliefs worth £11 million a year. Under the new plan, charitable status would be extended to council schools, helping them to raise funds through sponsorship and covenants.

The party remains opposed to subsidised assisted places

but it proposes an alternative version of bursaries for poorer children with special needs, which it defines to include exceptional talent.

The Liberal Democrats would allow education authorities to appoint representatives on independent school governing bodies and the sector would be subject to the national curriculum, tests and inspections. Individual schools could decide the extent of their partnership.

"We are recognising that independent schools are not going to go away. Private edu-

cation for 7 per cent of the population is an enormous resource and we want to find ways of tapping it for the widest possible use by the whole community," said Don Foster, the education spokesman.

An Independent Schools Information Service spokesman said: "Their change of heart on charitable status is welcome. It is a shame they cannot see their way to living with the assisted places scheme."

"We would certainly welcome any opportunity to have a very co-operative relationship with the state sector."



An expert on tree rings showed that the wood panel Gossaert used was cut from a tree felled in 1601

Tree expert finds lost art

How painting stored for 70 years was identified as a Gossaert

John Ezard
and Isabel Carlisle

AN EXPERT on dating tree rings has proved for the National Gallery that a painting hidden in its store for nearly 70 years is a lost work by the 16th century Flemish artist, Jan Gossaert.

The small painting, which is now on public display, was dismissed as an 18th century copy. But after it was brought up from stores for cataloguing, a dendrochronologist showed that the wood panel Gossaert used was cut from

a tree felled in the year 1601.

The work shows a seated virgin, draped in shades of red, with a naked Christ child trying to run off her lap, arms outstretched. Before being restored, it looked so unimpressive that the gallery nearly sold it after buying it as part of the French Bonaparte collection in 1860.

It had been in store since 1926, and so covered in yellow varnish that the grain of the wood was invisible. The face and shoulders of the Madonna had been altered to make it more saleable in the 19th century

art market. "It was a sad little thing," said Jill Dunkerton, a gallery conservator.

The cataloguer, Lorne Campbell, a lecturer at the Courtauld Institute, said: "My heart sank when I saw it."

Suspicion was aroused during cataloguing by the quality of its lettering and X-ray photographs which showed it had been over-painted. These revealed an underlying painting which was close in appearance to a print known to have been made in 1689.

In the gallery's display, the work now joins what is already the world's best collection of Gossaert paintings, including a large Adam and Eve lent by the Queen.

Royal Academy calls in Yard over 'theft'

John Ezard

THE Royal Academy has called in Scotland Yard to investigate allegations of theft and has issued a writ for alleged fraud against its head of finance, Trevor Clark.

Mr Clark, aged 43, the academy's bursar since 1979, was arrested last month and freed on bail pending inquiries, a statement by Scotland Yard said yesterday.

The academy has sought to freeze Mr Clark's bank accounts. He has left his job. The academy has also called in independent auditors, it emerged last night.

The institution's president, the architect Sir Philip Dow-

son, said the alleged losses were serious, but the academy would not know their scale until after fuller investigation. "It is something which hurts dedicated staff immensely. It feels terrible."

Sir Philip added: "The academy is well insured, and we have every hope of recovering any loss that has occurred."

The Scotland Yard statement said: "The theft is believed to have occurred between 1991 and 1995, and was reported to police on January 21."

"A 43-year-old man was arrested in connection with this inquiry on February 12, was bailed to return to West End Central police station on February 29, and has been re-bailed to return to Charing

Cross police station at a date yet to be arranged."

Mr Clark said he had been advised on legal grounds not to comment on the allegations. The academy writ, issued in the High Court last week, seeks damages for alleged fraud and alleged breach of the implied terms of Mr Clark's contract. It also complains of "breach of fiduciary trust".

The academy took these steps after concern about the results of a routine check on its accounts. Run by a council of 34 artists, the academy was founded by King George III in 1768 to encourage painting, sculpture, and architecture. Its first president was the painter Sir Joshua Reynolds.

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Expats' travails
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Maev Kennedy on the scholarly battle over century-old leases at Burlington House

Learned societies to fight eviction

THE Government is attempting to evict or force some of the most distinguished scholarly societies to buy their leasehold on premises which they have occupied for more than a century.

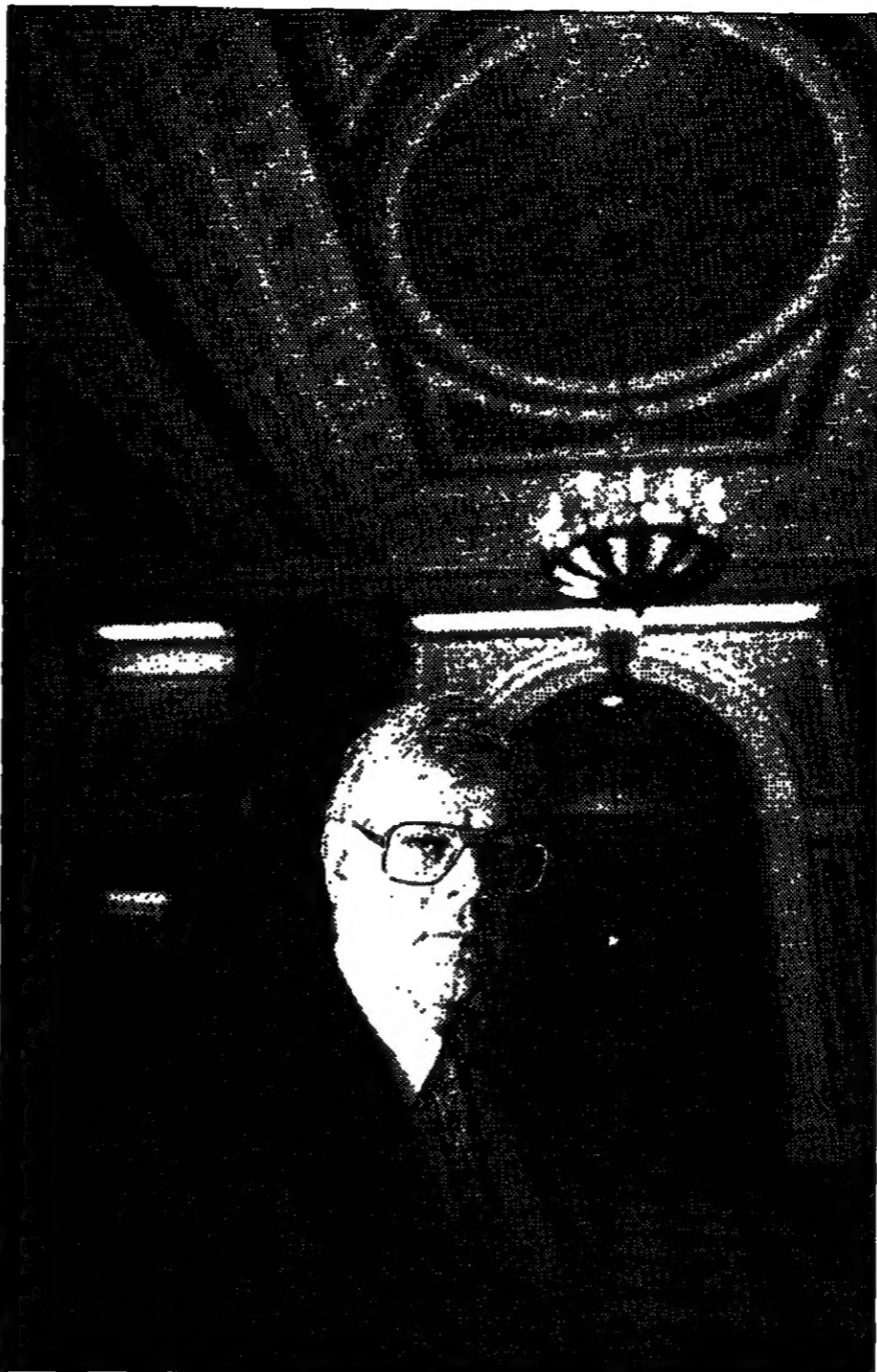


'If John Major goes ahead with this he will not only have shot himself in the head and the backside, and I will be happy to kick it for him.'

David Bellamy

The oldest is the Society of Antiquaries of London, founded in the 16th century and re-established in 1707, which moved to Burlington House in 1874.

ably only raise the money by selling some of their treasures, such as their copy of the Domesday Book, or the Tudor panel portrait of Queen Mary, which would provoke a scandal on the scale of Hereford Cathedral's attempt to sell the Mappa Mundi.



David Morgan Evans, secretary of the Society of Antiquaries

PHOTOGRAPH GARRY WEAVER

News in brief

HIV surgeon says he poses 'tiny' risk

A SURGEON with the HIV virus yesterday said that the risk to his patients would be "infinitesimally small" if he was allowed to return to the operating theatre.

More cash for 'sin-bins'

EXPERT teams are to be set up in 22 local education authorities to help teachers deal with disruptive pupils, it was announced yesterday.

Monk found dead

A MONK who was found dead at a leading Catholic public school could have suffocated in a bizarre nighttime incident at the weekend.

Backpackers behaving badly

BACKPACKERS behave badly abroad, indulging in casual sex and experimenting with drugs, says a survey.

Scottish council tax 'U-turn'

THE Government has agreed a £58-million concession to Scottish councils facing heavy council tax increases coupled with cuts in their spending plans.

Russian sailor's indigestion

A BIT of amateur surgery may have been responsible for the emergency call which cost the British taxpayer £1 million.

Two win the jackpot

TWO tickets hit the jackpot in the National Lottery draw, scooping £2.2 million each, the organisers, Camelot, said.

Tories press Rifkind on EMU

Patrick Wintour, Chief Political Correspondent

TORY Euro-sceptics are piling the pressure on the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, in advance of next week's white paper on Europe by demanding that he hardens the party's opposition to a single currency.

weekend reports that the Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, the Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine and the Defence Secretary Michael Portillo were resisting calls that a specific commitment to a referendum on a single currency be written into the white paper on the forthcoming inter-governmental conference starting on March 28 and likely to continue well into next year.

pose a single currency, implied that the whole structure of the European Union would need to be reviewed if some countries went ahead without some EU members.

ment, but it seems unlikely this can be repeated. Ministers have been resisting a new line on EMU being written into the white paper, arguing that the IGC will not tackle the single currency topic but will examine institutional reforms required by enlargement of the EU.

Patten considers return to UK fray

Rebecca Smithers, Political Correspondent

THE governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, is ready to relaunch his political career in Britain after the colony's handover to China next year, even if the Tories lose the general election.

would "certainly" consider a return to politics if an opportunity arose. Friends say he is interested whether or not the Tories win, and is interested in the new Kensington and Chelsea seat being fought in the next election by Sir Nicholas Scott.

Mr Patten said he was still "a political animal". Mr Patten said he "couldn't fail to still be interested" in British political issues.

Police use CS spray for first time on man in taxi row

Gary Young

POLICE used CS gas spray for the first time yesterday against a man who allegedly resisted arrest following a row with a taxi driver in Oldham, Greater Manchester.

subdue the 29-year-old man using more traditional methods. He became aggressive and abusive outside a nightclub in the early hours and allegedly kicked the door of a taxi.

him to be restrained and placed under arrest. Without it, it appears that an officer would have been injured.

more than 2,000 policemen in 16 forces in England and Wales for a six-month trial period on Friday amid grave concern that it may pose a health risk.

Asked in Hong Kong what his future plans after the handover in July 1997, he said: "I honestly don't know. When I was secretary of state for the environment I didn't spend a lot of time thinking about what I was going to be doing next. Ditto chairman of the party."

Entertainments

THEATRE LONDON

ADRIAN LOVETT'S MENTORSHIP... SUNSET BOULEVARD... BEST MUSICAL... THE CHANGING ROOM... AN IDEAL HUSBAND... CATS... THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA... THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS... OLIVER... LES MISERABLES... ROYAL SHAKESPEARE... THE BLOOD BROTHERS... KODD DRUMMERS... SKYLIGHT... CORNWALL

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FLIGHT MARKET

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FLYDRIVES... ORLANDO... LIBERTY WORLD TRAVEL... OVERSEAS

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FLYDRIVES... ORLANDO... LIBERTY WORLD TRAVEL... OVERSEAS

FLIGHT MARKET

FLYDRIVES... ORLANDO... LIBERTY WORLD TRAVEL... OVERSEAS

Wary Qatar digs in for more trouble

There is no love lost between the rulers of this Gulf region after the Valentine's Day 'conspiracy', writes Ian Black in Doha

LOOKING combative in sandbagged machine gun emplacements on the roof of army headquarters, not far from the emir's palace, Qatari soldiers still scan the streets of Doha for signs of trouble after last month's "vile conspiracy" against the regime.

or six officers, are now in prison, although their alleged leader is still at large. He is Sheikh Hamad bin Jasim, a discredited ex-minister said to have been waiting in his BMW across the border.

Israel — all sensitive points — and has offered the United States facilities for pre-positioning military equipment for another Gulf war.

Qatari officials single out Bahrain as having played a key destabilising role. Sheikh Hamad bin Jasim is said to have a Bahraini diplomatic passport and to have planned his moves in a Manama hotel.

News in brief

Iranian opposition boycotts election

IRAN'S only opposition party, the Iran Freedom Movement, will boycott the vote because the government has effectively refused to allow it to campaign, its leader, Dr Ebrahim Yazdi, said.

Russians in Chechen clash

RUSSIAN troops fought a fierce battle with rebels yesterday after being ambushed in a village in western Chechnya, Russia's top military commander in the breakaway republic said.

Afghans flee fighting

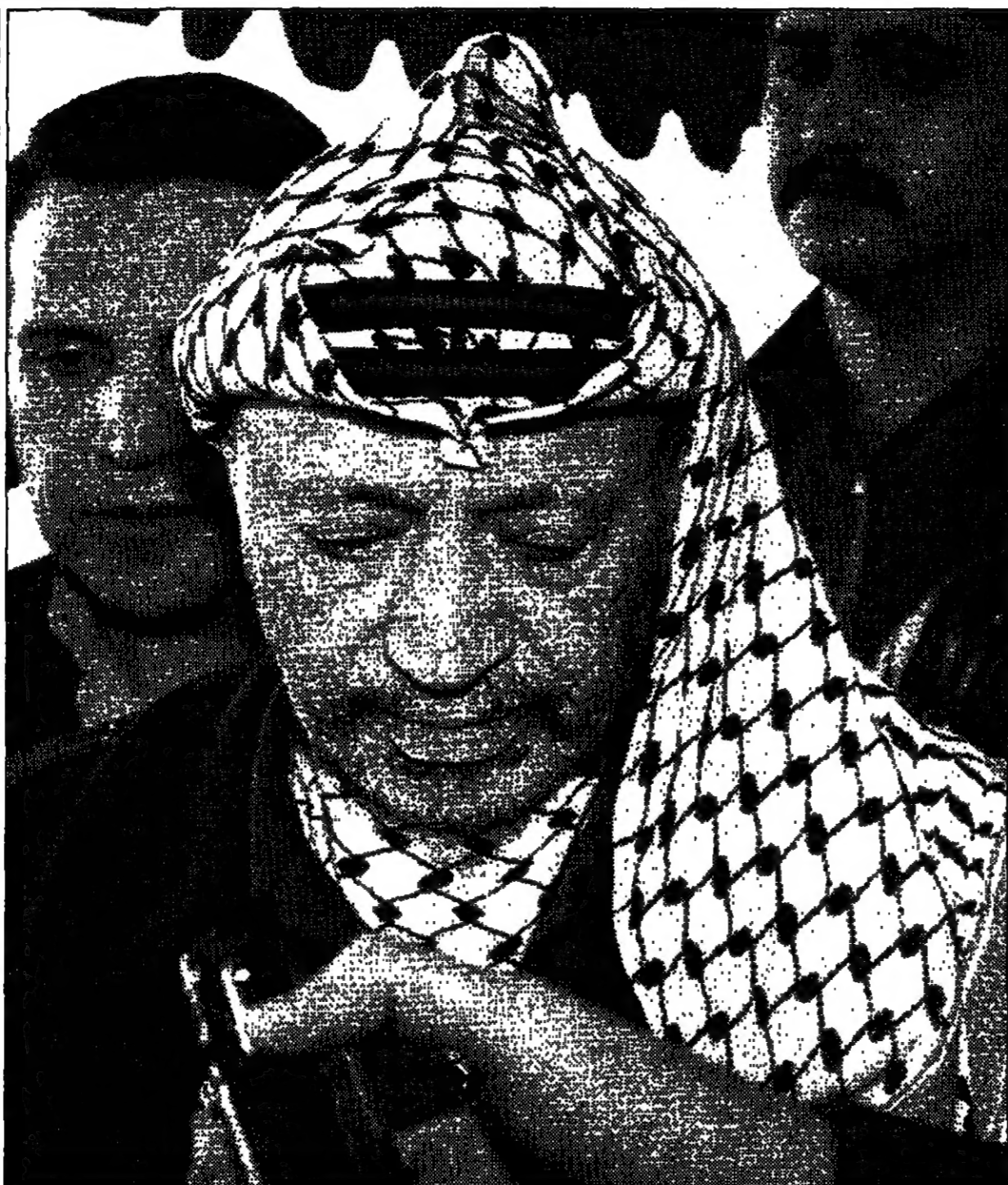
THOUSANDS of Afghan people fled their homes for government-controlled areas yesterday after fighting between two opposition groups in the northern city of Pul-i-Khumbur, aid agency sources said.

Film judges love Hate

AN ANTI-POLICE tale of brutality and alienation in France's urban ghettos has won the best film award at France's answer to the Oscars.

Iran 'training Bosnian troops'

THE BOSNIAN government has sent soldiers to Iran for training as part of an effort to revamp its military, senior Western and Bosnian government officials say.



A grim Yasser Arafat talks to reporters in Gaza City yesterday after the suicide bomb in Jerusalem. PHOTOGRAPH BY ADEL HANA

'Martyr' leaves perilous legacy

Derek Brown in Jerusalem reports on a deepening Hamas split and the threat to peace

LITTLE is known of Islam Mohammed, the young man who blew himself and 18 others to pieces in Jerusalem yesterday. He was 24, according to Palestine Liberation Organisation sources, and lived in the West Bank town of Hebron.

Bosnian war criminals enliven Sarajevo ski resort

Julian Borger on Mount Jahorina

THE heavy snowfall of the past fortnight has turned the Bosnian Serb flight from Sarajevo into a miserable, frostbitten debacle, but for the Serb elite enjoying the rarefied air 3,000 feet above the city these are the best skiing conditions since the end of the war.

The BMWs and Toyotas are waved through the Serb police checkpoints and speed up to the summit.

territory controlled by the Muslim-Croat federation. He shook his head at the absurdity of it all. The prospect of Bosnian police or crimes investigators from The Hague pursuing prominent Serbs through the snow was clearly unthinkable.

Corruption unites Spaniards against González

The young have no qualms about lurching to the right, reports Adela Gooch in Pozuelo

POZUELO, a sprawling, affluent suburb, is prime territory for the conservative Popular Party, where yesterday voters seemed determined to end 13 years of Socialist rule.

Traditional supporters are deserting the left en masse, writes John Hooper in Barajas

RAMON MARTIN stood by his taxi outside the polling station in Barajas, a town near Madrid's international airport.

Jaén. "They had a terrible standard of living. They worked a lot, earned a pittance," she said.

Nothing in the campaign had persuaded Ms Pérez to vote against the Socialists. "The way I see it is that we all complain a lot, and live a thousand times better than before."

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Castro unrepentant as US gains moral high ground

Cuban Americans mourn lost pilots

Phil Guseon in Miami

AS FUNERALS go, it was an unbroken line of fair. Half a dozen light aircraft swung in a tight circle marking the spot where a week earlier four Cuban-American pilots had lost their lives in a rocket attack by Cuban air-force MiGs.

Smoke from a flare rose into the sky while, a short distance away, the United States coastguard's 370ft cutter Galatin rode the swell. Two smaller cutters patrolled the so-called "goal line" established by the US to avoid the risk of further clashes.

As José Basulto's light blue Cessna — the only plane to escape from the incident on February 24 — spiralled lower over the spot, about 20 nautical miles from the Cuban coast, fragments of a service read by an exiled priest came over the radio. The plane dipped to 500ft as its occupants dropped white carvations into the sea.

Mr Basulto, the founder of the Brothers to the Rescue exile group, allowed himself a moment's grim humour.

"That concludes the ceremony," he said. "We are now proceeding to 17 miles from Cuba's coast and heading south." A startled journalist, half convinced the Bay of Pigs veteran was about to repeat earlier breaches of Cuban airspace, sought confirmation.

"I guess that was just to scare you guys," Mr Basulto admitted, smiling.

It was a different Mr Basulto who, with perhaps 60,000 others, stood just a couple of hours later at a memorial service in the Orange Bowl stadium, Miami, his face now crumpled with grief.

The Orange Bowl occupies a unique place in the memory

of Cuban exiles. It was here that John F Kennedy apologised for the 1961 Bay of Pigs débâcle, when his refusal to commit his air force to the US-backed invasion of Cuba condemned it to failure.

This time it was Madeleine Albright, Washington's ambassador to the United Nations, who had volunteered to speak on behalf of President Bill Clinton.

She declared that it was "because we have told the truth that [the Cuban president, Fidel] Castro has been

'Castro has been tried and convicted in the court of world opinion for his outrageous and brutal crime'

tried and convicted in the court of world opinion for his outrageous and brutal crime.

Already a somewhat unlikely hero to Cuban exiles for her forthright statements on the attack — including the memorable "that was not cojones [balls], that was cowards" — she further endeared herself by revealing her own background as a Czech refugee.

With the US backing in the unusual position of occupying the moral high ground over Cuba, the text of an interview with President Castro by Time magazine, released earlier in the day, did little for the communist leader's image.

Asked why, if it was true the Brothers' planes had violated Cuban airspace, they had not simply been forced

down, Dr Castro said it was "very difficult. We have tried it with drug traffickers and lost some of our planes."

The assertion was hard to reconcile with Saturday's image of the fragile Cessnas.

In the absence of further violence, the crisis seems likely to recede, although it will leave in place a US economic embargo both tightened and enshrined in law.

For Mr Basulto, the way forward is clear. "A new phase must now begin: the organisation of non-violent clandestine cells throughout the island," he told journalists on Saturday.

It was the Brothers' donation of several thousand dollars to the recently formed coalition of internal opposition groups known as the Cuban Council — as President Castro confirmed to Time magazine — that had contributed to the decision to shoot their planes down.

"What these people are doing was intolerable," Dr Castro said. "They were giving money and paying the bills of the dissidents."

But rather than spark mass civil disobedience, the immediate effect of the crisis has been a further crackdown on the opposition within Cuba.

"Each leader of the Cuban Council now has two plainclothes members of state security outside the door," said Sebastian Arcos, the Council's representative in Miami.

Some Cuban dissidents are less than convinced by Mr Basulto's strategy. "They are putting lives at risk, and the ones who pay are us, here at the mercy of the government," said Vladimiro Roca.

There is certainly no evidence to support the confident predictions of the Cuban regime's imminent demise.



Inconsolable... Mirta Costa, the mother of one of the four lost Brothers to the Rescue pilots, weeps at the Orange Bowl

PHOTOGRAPH MARTA LAVANDIER

Political frustration fails to halt the casting of nets

Behind the lines



ELECTION USA

TO THE untrained eye, the crates of twining, translucent prawns being hauled from the deck of the *Sirius* look like a study in abundance.

But Edward Thorb Joranson does not see it that way. He is thinking of the processing plant that used to stand where two refrigerated lorries now wait, and the futility of fishing boats that used to come up to the wharf nightly to disgorge their load.

"There must have been 40 boats shrimping out of here 25 years ago," he said. "Now maybe there are 15."

It's a familiar refrain in fishing villages along the US coast, from Europe and the United States but in Maine, a state renowned for its productive waters, it has suddenly been invested with a special poignancy. Drastic new restrictions aimed at protecting critically low fish stocks threaten to wipe out much of the state's oldest industry.

"We're in a very pivotal position right now," said Robin Alden, the state's commissioner for marine resources. "A lot of people are going to be put out of business."

Alarmed by a precipitous fall in the populations of so-called groundfish such as cod, haddock and flounder, the federal government has insisted on accelerating a reduction in the amount of fishing which, by 1996, will halve the number of days fishermen can put to sea.

They will also be barred from fishing in certain areas and new rules will govern the type of nets they can use.

"Now it's just a question of who survives and who doesn't," says Garry Hatch, who has fished in the area for 25 years.

By a brutal irony, Maine's 8,000 lobster fishermen, whose catch accounts for almost half of the state's fishing revenue, have never had it better.

Despite a decade of warn-

ings from the scientists that they are dangerously over-harvesting, catches continue to increase. "It's boom time for the lobster industry," said Mr Alden. "And nobody can tell us why."

The failure of scientists to explain the profusion of Maine lobsters is one reason its fishermen feel so ambivalent about the men and women with fancy degrees who try to tell them what they can and cannot catch.

At a gathering of Maine fishermen last week, one older-timer defended scientific research as a tool the fishermen could use in their own defence. But another sneered:

"Lies can figure, and figures can lie."

The fishermen are unanimous though in condemning the Washington bureaucracy in charge of protecting fisheries. "They don't have a clue about what really goes on and they're just for big business," said Mr Hatch, aged 42.

The only people Mr Hatch cares for less than the officials from the National Marine Fisheries Service are the recreational anglers who pour into the state every summer complaining that the commercial fishermen have ruined their sport.

"They have all these lobby groups like the Audubon Soci-

ety, and they tell people how terrible we are — but they don't tell people that we put food on the table," he said.

One reason that the fishermen traditionally have been less concerned about conservation than outsiders is that the simple economics of supply and demand have always seemed to compensate them for their diminishing catches.

"In 1977 I might have landed 3,000 to 4,000lb a week and got \$1.95 (£1.20) a pound for them," said John Higgins, who fishes for scallops. "Now I might get 70 to 80lb, but I'll get \$6.00 a pound — so it kind of makes up."

When one species became uneconomical, fishermen simply moved on to another. In the early 1980s, hundreds of scallop boats were built and learned to dive and went hunting for the bristly sea urchins whose roe was prized by Japanese gourmets.

With the roe fetching up to \$100 a pound at auction in Tokyo, divers could earn thousands of dollars a day. But, already, catches of the once common creatures are falling off and scientists are predicting that urchin stocks could soon be wiped out.

Slipping from a can of Budweiser as his son's boat putters up to the wharf, Mr Thorb Joranson, aged 56, reflects on how the industry has changed.

They used to haul up thousands of tons of redfish, but these days you could go for days without catching one. Frank O'Hara, the last commercial fisherman in Rockland, a few miles up the jagged coast, has just moved his boat to Alaska.

Thankfully, it has been a good year for shrimp. But now, there are rumours of new limits on shrimping too.

"Every new fishery you go to gets squeezed and pretty soon you get no place to go," said Mr Thorb Joranson.

Although the frustration with the federal government echoes one of this year's most popular political themes, Mr Thorb Joranson doubts many of his fellow fishermen will bother to vote in tomorrow's Republican primary.

"It doesn't seem to make much difference who gets in," he said. Most guys won't miss a day's fishing."

But an expelled Labour renegade, Graeme Campbell, was returned to Kalgourlie as an independent with an increased majority. Summing up the mood of many observers, the outbreak MP said: "I don't believe people were voting for the Liberal Party, I believe they were voting against Paul Keating."

It was a serious reversal of fortune for Labour, with which Britain's Tony Blair has close links. In the 1980s, it held power in most states.

Turkish rivals form secular coalition

Chris Nutball in Ankara

TURKEY'S two main secular parties formed a historic coalition yesterday to deny power to the pro-Islamic Welfare Party.

A coalition protocol was signed by the leader of the True Path Party, Tansu Ciller, and her counterpart in the Motherland Party, Mesut Yilmaz. It came exactly 10 weeks after they were runners-up to Welfare in the general election.

Mrs Ciller said she was making a sacrifice in reaching an agreement with her rival for leadership of the centre-right.

"I am doing this because I don't believe Welfare coming to power is good for Turkey," she said, "especially with its very different ideas on how to rule the state."

To keep the two leaders from tearing the coalition apart with their squabbling, Mrs Ciller is expected to retire to the backbenches until the end of the year.

Mr Yilmaz said that Turkey will rotate the prime minister's office for the first time. He will occupy the post first and Mrs Ciller will succeed him in 1997, before handing the post back in 1998. Negotiations between them broke down twice over who would be prime minister first.

Motherland and the True Path have fought for the centre ground since they were founded, after the 1980 military coup, by the late Turgut Ozal and the president, Suleyman Demirel. Both are pro-Western centre-right parties with similar programmes, but they have been rivals because of personality clashes between their leaders. They have been brought together by the first election victory of an Islamic party in the 73-year history of the secular republic.

Welfare fell well short of an overall majority in parliament, but seemed close to forming a government with Motherland last month. Snor-

relly supporting the coalition, Welfare may be alone in opposition. Western governments and investors will breathe more easily with Welfare excluded from power. It had threatened to re-negotiate a trade deal with the European Union and reassess Turkey's Nato membership. It could still force the removal of British, French and American forces from their base in southern Turkey at the end of the month.

The mandate for Operation Provide Comfort, supporting the Kurds of Northern Iraq, expires then. MPs from secular parties are threatening to join Welfare in voting against its renewal.

It will be a minority government, 15 seats short of an overall majority. But the leader of the Democratic Left Party, Bulent Ecevit, has promised his 75 MPs will abstain when Mr Yilmaz seeks an initial vote of confidence. With other secular parties

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Australia votes Keating out

Christopher Zinn in Sydney

AUSTRALIA'S hopes of becoming a republic by the year 2000 were upset yesterday when the Labor government was swept out of power after 13 years.

The prime minister Paul Keating's plans to lead Labour to a sixth term were wiped out after just 90 minutes of counting showed a swing of almost 6 per cent to the conservative Liberal-National Party Coalition.

Mr Keating's defeat signals uncertainty over the future of Australia's economic and cultural push into Asia, and the implementation of controversial aboriginal native land title laws.

Trade unions warned the prime minister-elect, John Winston Howard, that the agreement which had guaranteed industrial peace during Labour's tenure was dead.

Many Labour supporters were still in shock last night, 24 hours after one of the worst routs in the country's 95-year federal history.

A former Labour prime minister, Bob Hawke, who led the party to four election wins, said it was the end of an era. Referring to Mr Keating, he said: "His problem has been one of remoteness, aloofness, arrogance."

More than a third of Labour's MPs and cabinet ministers lost their seats as floating voters decided the time was right for a change.

But an expelled Labour renegade, Graeme Campbell, was returned to Kalgourlie as an independent with an increased majority. Summing up the mood of many observers, the outbreak MP said: "I don't believe people were voting for the Liberal Party, I believe they were voting against Paul Keating."

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Rebels ignore leaders' order to free hostages

John Aglionby in Jakarta

SEPARATIST guerrillas holding 12 hostages, including four Britons, in Indonesia's remote Irian Jaya province have refused to free them despite being ordered to do so by their leaders in exile.

The rift within the Free Papua Movement (OPM) emerged after leaders in Sydney sent a letter to Kelly Kwalik, the rebel leader holding the hostages, saying that the movement's goal of attracting international attention to their cause had been achieved, according to a source close to the rescue operation.

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The OPM is campaigning for independence for Irian Jaya, the western half of the island of New Guinea, which was ceded to Indonesia in 1963 under a United Nations-sponsored deal.

Mr Kwalik refused to comply with the order because he distrusts the Indonesian army and is afraid of retaliation by soldiers on Irianese tribespeople after he releases his captives, the source said. Several suspected OPM members have been shot by the army in Irian Jaya in the past year.

Last Friday, Bartholomeus Magal, an Irianese tribal chief, accused the army of harassing his people. "The military have tortured and beaten our people and accused us of supporting the OPM. I don't know why they kill young men and arrest many people in that belief," he said.

The source said Mr Kwalik would only release the hostages if ordered to do so by the OPM's supreme leader, who lives in neighbouring Papua New Guinea. He added that Mr Kwalik's refusal to comply with the letter means hopes are fading of a speedy conclusion to the crisis.

The captives include Cambridge University graduates Daniel Start, Bill Oates, Anna McIvor and Annette van der Kolk. They were undertaking biological research when seized on January 5.

Indonesian army spokesmen are refusing to comment on the letter or when the captives might be released. They maintain they will not bow to terrorism, but promise to free the hostages by peaceful means.

Representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross made what is believed to be their ninth visit to Mr Kwalik yesterday, in an attempt to mediate on behalf of the Indonesian army. A doctor who examined the hostages on Thursday said they were healthy but thin.

A strong earthquake hit Irian Jaya province yesterday, where at least 105 people were killed in an earthquake last month. There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties, Muhammad Said, an officer of the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency, said.

The earthquake, which struck at 9.41am local time with a preliminary magnitude of 6.1, was centred about 50 miles east of Biak Island. Biak was battered by tidal waves after the earthquake last month.

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So the GP's current plea to be left alone stands as much chance as penicillin against a mutant superbug.

Mark Lawson page 9

ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPICE
 100, MARE ST. LONDON E8 5SA
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Dear Anonymous Friends,

You did not wish your gifts to be spoiled by human words of thanks. Their value gleams in the untold relief you silently provide.

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News in brief

Gunmen kill TV official
 Gunmen thought to be Muslim guerrillas abducted an Algerian television official, killed him and dumped his body in a forest in eastern Algeria, state television said. The victim was named as Belgeacem Saadi, aged 40, director of the photographic unit at Skikda, eastern Algeria. —Reuter.

Dhaka clashes
 Bangladesh opposition activists took to the streets yesterday to demonstrate their rejection of a peace offer by the prime minister, Begum Khaleda Zia. —Reuter.

Fans mourn band
 Troops were sent to São Paulo yesterday to handle a crush of fans mourning the rock band Mamonas Assassinas whose members were killed when their private plane crashed. —AP.

Denktash 'stable'
 The Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash is in a stable condition after suffering a heart attack. —Reuter.

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The hammer of Hamas

Can Peres save the peace?

THE BLOOD WAS drenched miserably by the pouring rain yesterday in Jaffa Road: has the peace process also been washed away? The effect of two bombs is much more than double that of one. It indicates a state of hostilities which has instantly provoked — as it was no doubt calculated to do — an unprecedented array of Israeli measures amounting in turn to a declaration of war. Hamas's offer of a truce has to be seen in this sceptical light. Whether or not there are more bombs, both the peace process and the chance of Labour's re-election are now in grave risk.

Shimon Peres has been forced by the bombers into reacting in a manner previously out of character: he has become... Yitzhak Rabin. Mr Rabin always stressed the primacy of "security" even when this seriously delayed the agreed peace timetable. Now Mr Peres himself is obliged to declare that the war against Hamas will have "the highest and most unequivocal priority" — a statement with the unmistakable ring of Rabin. Any advance now in the peace process — in particular, the transition to "final stage" negotiations — is now almost certain to be suspended even at the level of informal contact. The cabinet's new commitment towards a policy of "separation" of the Israeli population from the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza also echoes the severely partitionist outlook of Mr Rabin. It implies reviving the various schemes for physical barriers to keep the two communities apart even though these have been judged impracticable. Worse still, it amounts to a declaration that Palestinians and Jews are not now regarded as capable of living together. If this is more than a temporary reaction to the bombing, it is a devastating blow to any attempt at bridge-building between the two communities and any real spirit of trust.

Yasser Arafat is now caught between the hammer of Hamas and the Israeli anvil — a position he has desperately tried to avoid. Whether he could have done more is a matter for debate: in all probability, if he had adopted tougher measures before towards Hamas, they would simply have raised the stakes earlier. In fact Israel never delegated complete responsibility for dealing with Hamas and the other militant groups to Mr Arafat, only asking him to "do his part". The situation is now made worse by the Israeli cabinet's decision to authorise the army to engage "sources of Hamas activity" wherever it may think fit. This implies free license to take reprisal action in towns already under the control of Mr Arafat's Palestinian Authority — providing fresh ammunition for Hamas.

The outrage and anguish of ordinary Israelis can be easily imagined. So can the danger: that this second bomb may bring electoral victory closer for Likud and the deeply opportunistic Benjamin Netanyahu. The burden of Likud's extremist connections — underlined when Mr Rabin was shot down — has already been lightened by the first bomb: the second may give Mr Netanyahu a disastrous advantage for Israel and for peace. Mr Peres has to counter this threat as well as that of the bomb. But he must somehow do so while ensuring that the door marked peace is still left open.

Left out down under

An era ends in Australia — and Spain

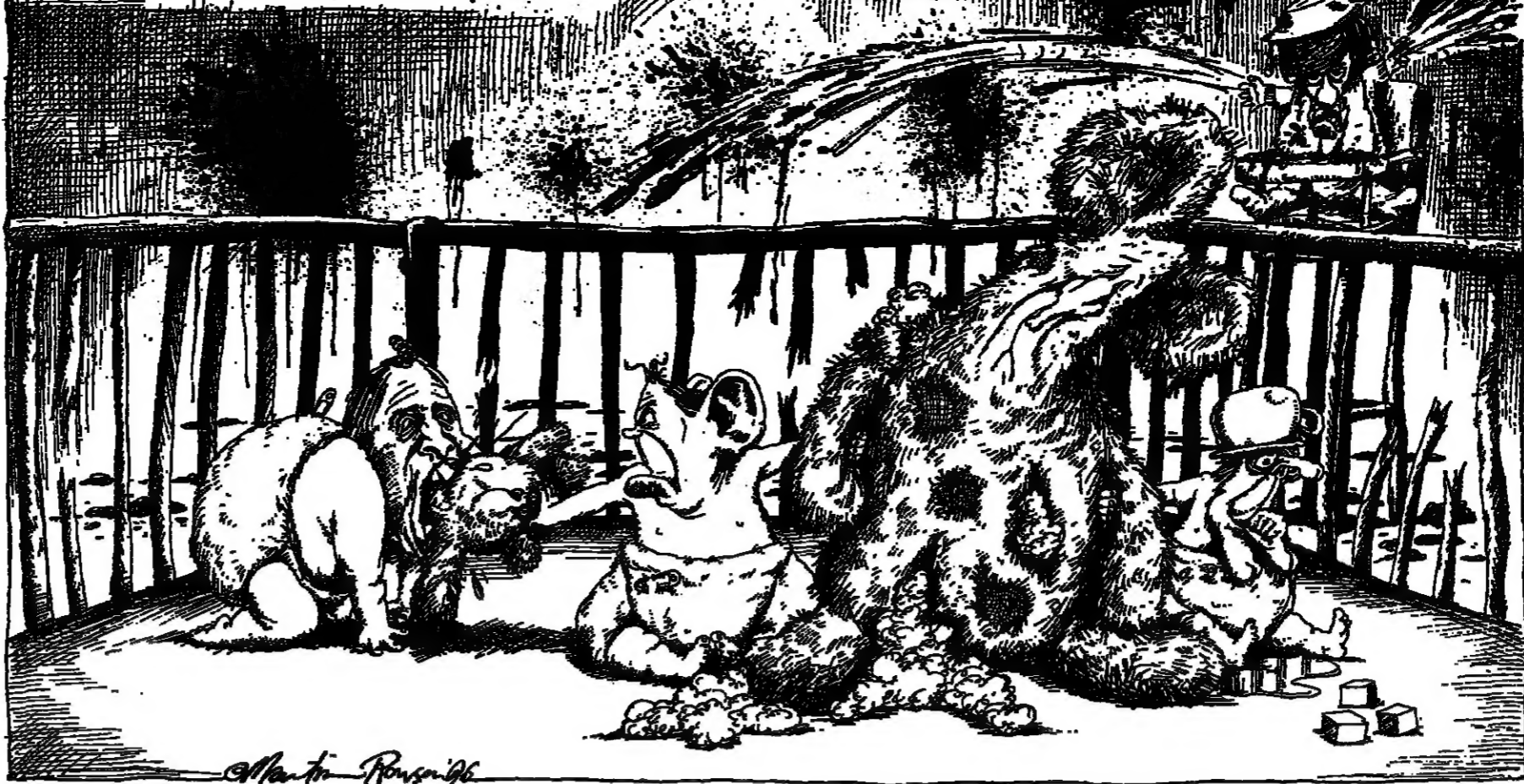
TWO SOCIALIST governments that have long been part of the world political equation disappeared this weekend. In Australia on Saturday, Paul Keating's Labor administration was swept away after 13 years in office. Then last night Felipe Gonzalez's socialist coalition lost power after a 14-year reign in Spain. Both Keating and Gonzalez had been lucky to survive last time their countries went to the polls in 1993. Both have now been firmly elected three years later, as almost all the forecasts had long predicted. Nevertheless, for Australia and for Spain important eras have ended.

Although Spain is Britain's partner in the European Union, most people in this country probably know more about the situation in Australia. This is partly because of our historic ties, but it is also because Australian Labor's success under Bob Hawke and Mr Keating has been seen as a model for the reinvention of the British Labour Party. That model remains relevant in spite of Saturday's conclusive defeat. The ALP's key achievement was to know what it wanted and to take the long view about achieving it. It managed to balance liberal economics with equitable social policies at a time when global orthodoxy said this was impossible. It recognised the need for partnership with trade unions when that was out of fashion too. It put itself at the forefront of modern thinking in many fields, fiercely supporting native Australian rights, launching a cultural policy which is the envy of the world, and setting Australia on a course which could still make the nation a republic, in spite of Labor's defeat. There is much there for us to learn from, providing that Tony Blair allows his party to discuss it.

Like 20th century Australia, 20th century Spain has a long socialist pedigree. Just as in Australia, the left in Spain has always been indisputably the modernising force in that country's politics. That has been particularly true of the Gonzalez era, which has comprised 14 of the 19 years of Spain's post-Franco democracy. The socialists have presided over the economic transformation of Spain, its reintegration into European and world structures, the historic devolution of power to the provinces and, above all, the transition from fascism to democracy, ironically under a constitutional monarchy. The fact that the right's victory last night causes few of the tremors which it would have provoked 20 years ago is part of the achievement.

Many will conclude that the simultaneous defeats of two of the world's more resilient left-wing governments of modern times underline a wider crisis for socialism elsewhere. That view should not be dismissed out of hand. It is true, for example, that both Keating and Gonzalez had increasing difficulty persuading their blue collar constituencies to accept the costs of liberal economic restructuring — with political consequences we now see. It is also true that both governments have become discredited by political scandal, though more in Spain than in Australia. Yet these problems are not unique to socialist governments. A more obvious explanation for the double defeats is simply that voters were ready for a change. It is very difficult to win re-election after being in power for more than a decade. British Tories should remember that before they crow.

A mature democracy: latest pictures...



Letters to the Editor

Ron Davies, prince among men

RON DAVIES' remarks were refreshing antidotes to the endemic sycophantic hypocrisy from other MPs on monarchy. Almost all Tory MPs benefit from the royal favours of knighthoods, invites to garden parties or the prized photograph of a royal handshake. They gush greedily from the golden rivers of patronage that corruptly flow from this discredited and doomed institution. Ron's questions echo those of the great majority.

- Should a future monarch teach his children that animals can be tormented and slaughtered for fun?
Is it really essential to provide vast sums of royal "useful benefit" to maintain one family in seven palaces — one of which has 600 rooms?
Is it right that one person should spend more on her underwear than the entire annual income of a basic pensioner?
Why inflict on Harry and William the miserable existence suffered by their father?
Ex-Tory MP and historian Robert Rhodes James argues that the personality of the present Queen avoided a continuation of Thatcher rule. He

believes that when she was in trouble in her own party in 1990 she planned to survive by calling a general election. Neither parliament nor her cabinet could have stopped her. Only the monarch now can halt a PM acting in her or his own interests rather than those of the nation. Would Charles have sufficient strength of character to stop a future Prime Minister who was out of control? Such a task should be entrusted only to an elected head of state. The hereditary principle has no place in a modern democracy. Ending it in the House of Lords is only the start. Tony Paul Flynn MP, Newport West (Lab), 10 Seagrass House, London SW1A 0AA.

THREE cheers for Ron Davies. Why should he be silenced? It is about time the Labour Party stopped being afraid of asserting its views — in this case sections of the media and, presumably the electorate — and debated the issue of monarchy seriously and sensibly. Anthony A Deane, 40 Seagrass House, Canonbury Road, London N1 2AJ.

DESPITE arguments that such pursuits help preserve the countryside, public opinion is rapidly swinging in favour of animal rights, and the Prince ignores this at his peril, particularly when encouraging his two young sons to hunt and shoot. If current trends continue, "blood sports" will be a far greater cause of disapproval than adultery. Divorce will shortly resolve one issue, but the continuing participation by Prince Charles and his sons in hunting and shooting will provide ample scope for further criticism, and undermine his otherwise admirable projects. A M S Hutton-Wilson, Fricory Cottage, Evercreech, Somerset BA4 6HX.

THE row over Ron Davies' remarks points up the fact that there is no respectability of the British people can express opinions about their head of state. It is particularly galling on the weekend of the Australian elections, that their younger generation, based so heavily on our own, can apparently be trusted to debate views

about their head of state, while we are denied such a privilege. Jane Barber, London SW18.

IF I FIND Tory reasoning rather confusing, they say for the resignation of a Shadow Cabinet Minister for disapproving publicly of the Prince. However, they do not consider the misleading Parliament by Cabinet Ministers to be a resigning matter. I M Davies, 33 Myrtle Hill, Ponthenry, Llanelli, Dyfed SA15 5PD.

WE might learn from the British Red Cross who, at short notice, substituted Cilla Black for their fundraiser in place of the emotionally exhausted Princess of Wales. In doing so, they have demonstrated what we have suspected, that the royals are now just a branch of show biz, and their functions can be performed just as well, and much more cheaply, by trained professionals. Harry Jones, 17 West End, March, Cambridge PE15 8DJ.

Why Australia elects to keep its emotional ties with Britain

YOUR article (A town like Elizabeth, February 29) leaves the impression that Australian-British links overall have declined and that the republic debate in Australia is about these links. Neither view is correct. It is true that the 1986 Australia Act severed all constitutional links between Australia and Britain. Australia is a completely independent country and the Queen of Australia is a different legal personality from the Queen of the United Kingdom. But, despite the severing of our constitutional links in 1986, the number of visitors between our two countries has increased some 50 per cent and is now approaching the million mark a year.

Australia has risen from about sixth or seventh in investment in the United Kingdom to number three, ahead of Japan, Germany and France. The UK has passed now just a branch of show biz, and their functions can be performed just as well, and much more cheaply, by trained professionals. Harry Jones, 17 West End, March, Cambridge PE15 8DJ.

Britain. It is about Australian national self-identity. In a recent poll, asking how they would vote in a referendum on the issue, four out of five Australians favoured an Australian national as head of state. But I would imagine a similar poll held in any country would yield similar results. D C Goss, Deputy High Commissioner, Australian High Commission, Strand, London WC2B 4LA.

AT LEAST some of the apparent bad feelings you mention are due to Australian dislike of pompous privilege, on the one hand, and British annoyance at Australian brassiness on the other. And, while Britain still in large part appeals to the heart, republican America appeals to the head — not least through almost instant US armed support as Britain's Pacific defence plans collapsed when Japan entered the war, leaving Australia isolated. Len Clarke, 1 Middle Road, Denham, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 5EG.

Nuclear risk

THE alleged interest of the American operator Duke Power in purchasing British nuclear plants highlights the enormous differences between the UK and the US arrangements for third party liability following a major accident (Self-off raises safety margin fears, February 24).

In the UK the entire industry has to insure itself for an upper limit of only £160 million. In the US, each reactor must have cover for £180 million. Compare with the US the UK is therefore grossly under-insured. A nice little advantage for American shareholders at the expense of the UK public.

The Government should be asking the insurance industry to make a proper assessment of the risks and to calculate the premiums accordingly. Fiona Hall, Bridget Gabbins, Druridge Bay Campaign, Tower Buildings, Oldgate, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 1PY.



Soaps do the dirty on the Irish

IN THE current uncertainties between Ireland and England, I have noticed one fixed thing: the portrayal of the Irish in English TV soaps. In Brookside, Trevor Jordash, the psychopath who beat up his wife and abused his daughter, was Irish. So, of course, was his sister, the bitter witch.

In Coronation Street, Carmel, the unbalanced, malevolent nanny, was Irish. And in the Street last week, the idiot rogue who exorcised the ghost too spoke in — to use that phrase beloved by the

English press — "a soft Irish accent". Northern Irish viewers have long felt safe with their Street representative, Jim MacDonnell, the loyal Belfast squaddie. But when the chips are down, he's Irish too: this week he beats his English wife Liz to pulp. Adrian Kenny, 4 Kingsland Parade, Portobello, Dublin.

Please include a full postal address, even e-mail address, and a telephone number. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear.

Order, order

UNDER the Tories, we have moved away from the benefits system based largely on social insurance principles towards a residual system relying on means tests (Ministers aim to keep Edon uncashed the other day and wishing I'd brought my skis, I remembered those early months of 1947 that carried off something like two million sheep and lambs nationwide and brought many Lakeland farmers to the verge of despair. This was the winter when a railway engine was buried for weeks near Barris station in north Westmorland and they had to call out the troops to clear the railway cuttings. Driving over Shap sells one day, I remember May 26, there was grass graph poles just peeping above the great banks of snow at the side of the road. Once or twice I went down to my office in Kendal on skis; the snow was too deep for walking. The grim winter was preceded by a dismal autumn harvest and accompanied by

FOR Alistair Burt (Society, February 28) to say that the Government's four-year-long obstruction of my Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill was spent "listening" to disabled people makes William Waldegrave seem like a slave to linguistics. The bill was drafted by Aif Morris MP, House of Commons.

A Country Diary

THE LAKE DISTRICT: They said the winter of 1962-63 was one of the hardest Britain has ever had to endure but, in these parts, it was nothing like so severe as the winter of 1946-47. Enjoying the snow on the fells, I was out walking and wishing I'd brought my skis, I remembered those early months of 1947 that carried off something like two million sheep and lambs nationwide and brought many Lakeland farmers to the verge of despair. This was the winter when a railway engine was buried for weeks near Barris station in north Westmorland and they had to call out the troops to clear the railway cuttings. Driving over Shap sells one day, I remember May 26, there was grass graph poles just peeping above the great banks of snow at the side of the road. Once or twice I went down to my office in Kendal on skis; the snow was too deep for walking. The grim winter was preceded by a dismal autumn harvest and accompanied by

floods as well as blizzards of exceptional ferocity. All over the fells that winter, and throughout the summer, you would come across the sad remains of sheep that had perished in the snow although many, buried sometimes for a fortnight or longer, were recovered alive. Sheep overblown by snow are not in any immediate danger and, if found before too long by the shepherd and his dogs, are usually noose the worse for their adventure. The worst months for the farmers were February and March and they said that, by Easter Monday April 7, there was just no pasture anywhere for the few sheep that had escaped. Yet by Whit Monday, May 26, there was grass everywhere in abundance — farmers had never seen it grow so fast — and the month went out in a blaze of heat. There were still snow patches on the fells in June but it was the hottest for 100 years. A HARRY GRIFFIN

Gerry Adams is part of the Troubles

Endpiece

Roy Hattersley

WHY, I wonder, do we work so hard to polish Gerry Adams' already gleaming ego. The easy answer — offered out of habit and without much thought — is that the president of Sinn Fein is a potential influence for peace. Two bombs in as many weeks suggest that, if he is arguing for an end to violence, nobody in the IRA is listening. Meanwhile, by treating him as if he is essential to a permanent settlement, we glorify and glamorise intransigence, bigotry and extremism. Long ago, I was taught that terrorists had to be detached from the decent people who give them misguided support. Adams unites sentimental Republicans with the pathological killers who think that murder is part of a political process. Every time he visits America or meets civil servants, the idea that Ireland

unfree will never be at peace gets new lease of life. Ireland, although wrongly partitioned, has been free for 70 years — admittedly for part of the time an elective dictatorship, but there are a lot of those about. It is absolute nonsense to think of Adams as one of the colonial revolutionaries who went on to lead independent countries. Makarios, Mugabe and Kenyatta spoke for whole nations of subject people who — being denied the vote — had no choice but to challenge their oppressors by force of arms. Northern Ireland is a democracy which rejects the idea of unity with the south. It is democracy that creates Adams' problem. For he leads — or at least he fronts — the fringe party which De Valera (the father of the Irish Republic) abandoned. And it does not even attract majority support amongst Northern Ireland's Republican minority. I share Adams' view that Ireland should never have been divided and must be reunited. But the attempt to impose that policy on reluctant Loyalists by blowing up innocent civilians is not an

activity which stands much comparison with the civil campaign for Indian independence. To suggest that Adams and Gandhi are both part of the same anti-colonial struggle is a shameful perversion of history. It also leads to other logical absurdities which ought to be knocked on the head. Chief amongst them is Sinn Fein's response to demands for the surrender of IRA arms — a question which would be less stupid if it were only rhetorical. When they ask, are the British forces going to contribute to the peace process by leaving Northern Ireland? The proper reply to that demand for reciprocation — territorial on one side and military "in aid of the civil power" on the other — is: "don't be silly". The troops are there at the will of an elected government and their presence is legitimised by the approval of a representative parliament. The army has made mistakes, but it is not to be compared with thugs in balaclava helmets who shoot off-duty policemen in their living rooms. Yet I have heard the Secre-

try of State for Northern Ireland speak so Sinn Fein demands for troop withdrawal with the emollient assurance that most now remain in barracks, some have returned to Britain and many more soon will. It sounds as if Gerry Adams is a participant in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks, not the spokesman for the political wing of an organisation whose military cadres send gullible young men on London buses carrying bombs. The suspicion that the IRA had got politically above itself — whilst remaining morally beneath contempt — was confirmed by an item in last Friday's television news. The Government, a young reporter said, anxious not to push its arguments too far, in case, when a compromise was reached, the murder squads regarded it as "loss of face" and thought that *amour-propre* requires them to start killing people again. There can not be much point in trying to negotiate — which means reason — with men whose warped personalities impel them to commit indiscriminate murder so that they will

be treated with greater respect. We should not hesitate to talk to them if talking seems likely to produce the desired result. But in the case of Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein, we may have reached the point where talking does more harm than good. No doubt, several times last year, John Major sacrificed the chance of lasting peace in order to curry favour with the Ulster Unionists and won their tacit support for his dying government by diverting the peace process towards the destination of their choice. But only one sort of men respond to political machinations by planting a bomb which kills two innocent newsagents. The sort who will always turn to violence when they do not get their own way and are therefore not worth talking to. By giving so much publicity and apparent power to their chief apologist — coffin-carrier to one of the Shankhill Road bombers who blew himself up whilst murdering children in a fish and chip shop queue — we may well be holding the peace process back. We are certainly diminishing

the importance which is accorded to John Hume — the man who kept the hope of peace alive and, by his dogged daring, fought on for hope to be made a reality while the rest of us despaired. The sensible course is simply to take his advice. If, whilst the IRA and Sinn Fein prevaricate, the Prime Minister agreed to hold the peace poll that John Hume suggests, where would that leave Gerry Adams? The people of Northern Ireland would vote for a ceasefire by a huge majority. And the negotiations for a lasting settlement could begin — attended by all those political parties which had campaigned for peace during the referendum. Lions would lie down with lambs and only jackals would be excluded. Gerry Adams would have to choose between speaking up for decency and being relegated to the status of anachronism. He would end his posturing on the Falls Road under the wall painting of Bobby Sands and it would put him in the proper historical perspective. More important, it would permanently detach him from the decent people of Ireland.

Riga Diary

David Hearst

THE FIRST thaws are breaking the hold of a hard winter on the art nouveau facades of Riga. It's a perilous time for all. Cars deep in melting snow, icicles, clustered in gothic chandeliers on the once-proud German balconies, come crashing down without warning.

Wooden poles casually laid on the pavement mark the spot of the last ice fall, but it's every Latvian or Russian for himself. The proud architecture of this Baltic port is frozen in time. This is one city in the north-east corner of Europe whose Orthodox cathedrals were not blown up by the Nazis, whose centre was not carpet bombed by the RAF, or levelled by the advancing Red Army.

The fabric is still intact. It's the people who bear the worst scars of the last 50 years of gruesome history. Cyrillic notices have been chiselled off the public face of Riga, but you can still see their shadow on the side of the railway station. The city has been aggressively de-sovietised, since independence, but over half its inhabitants are ethnic Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Jews, for whom the Latvian language has become a shipwreck.

A cultural apartheid is being practised by a coalition government formed from radical nationalists — who want the non-Latvians kicked out — and from liberal nationalists who, under the guise of integration with the European Union and Nato, want them phased out. Six years ago, in those heady days of independence, when Moscow was a communist, the city was alive with cultural dissidents. It had thriving rock groups. It staged the first blues festival in the Soviet Union, the first heavy metal festival, and in 1989 they organised a Rock for Independence concert. B B King, James Brown, Willy Dixon all lent a hand.

On the wall of the Saxophone club is the King Canute verdict of the Soviet censor, sitting on the shores of the Baltic trying to stop the waves of Western imports. On B B King's lyrics, the Komsomol boss wrote: "No observations to make."

TODAY, Andrei Yablumovich, the manager of the old Riga Rock Club which organised the festivals, and now co-manager of The Saxophone, sits in his small basement club. He is leader of rock band Cement. What counts is not the quality of his music, but the fact that he is a Russian. He has lived all his life in Riga, but now he is a non-Latvian, a non-citizen, definitely an Untermensch.

"I know that with my songs in Russian I would never have access to Latvian state TV. I can even get into the Microphone competition with a song in English. They would say: 'Please, you're welcome.' But with a Russian one, never."

How does the old blues lyric go? "If you're white, that's nice. If you're black, get back..." Russian is banned on Channel One of Latvian state TV. The second state channel is not broadcast more than 20 per cent of airtime in any foreign language. Private channels are restricted to 30 per cent.

"I don't want to say we are good and Latvian groups are bad. But they were applying rock and playing them to the collective farms. They are deeply conservative. When we were playing punk, and they saw our clothes and our lyrics, like 'My father is an alcoholic', they turned around and said: 'So that's your great culture, is it?'"

Latvian rock is played with a neat designer stubble, all protest carefully expunged in the need to reassert a folksy rural culture. Depeche Mode, U2, anything from the West is deemed safe. Anything local is banned. "Now rock festivals are organised every year, and they invite groups from Moscow, Petersburg, but not us. Many of these groups are playing such rubbish."

CHARLES DOESN'T THINK RIGI'S SUBJECTS TO BEHAVING SECRETARIES

Peres faces a great irony. For so long as extremists on either side have the will to act, the mechanics of the peace process itself now assist them. The perpetrators of last week's bombings came from Hebron, still outside Arafat's control altogether. But the more territory Israel cedes to Arafat's

The slick in pursuit of the sick

Commentary

Mark Lawson

LAST week, Britain's general practitioners began an advertising campaign intended to discourage vices and encourage healthy eating. They have observed a growing epidemic in Britain of imagined illness and body paranoia. Doctors are supposed to be good at diagnosis and the observation of symptoms, so perhaps they should have noticed that the likeliest cause of the rash of call-outs was clearly on display last week.

The seven days in which they launched their campaign comprised both Male Health Awareness Week and Tinnitus Awareness Week. It is a perfect conflict of opinions: doctors attempting to bolt the surgery door at the exact moment the media encourage another march on it. Doctors are wrong in their belief that the patients lengthening their days and shortening their nights are suffering from hypochondria. They are stricken with Awareness.

If the nineties could be snapped like a stick of rock, one of the words written through its middle — along with "counselling" — would

undoubtedly be "awareness". Yet to come this month are Worm Awareness Week (intestinal infestation in pets, rather than humans) and National Continence Day, while the entire 31 days apparently form Vegetarian Pledge Month, in which we will be encouraged to swear off meat. The big morning question is no longer "What will I wear today?" but "What will I be aware of?"

It is also clear that the awareness industry is becoming ever slicker at promotion. Last week's tinnitus campaign was sponsored by BBC Radio 3, apparently because it is an aural disorder particularly distressing to musicians. This new phenomenon of branded health campaigns raises the prospect of Groin Strain Awareness Week on Sky Sports, while the Discovery channel, with its penchant for undersea documentaries, could host Depression Sickness Week.

So the GPs' current plea to be left alone stands about as much chance as penicillin against a mutant superbug. A recurrent theme of the Male Health Awareness Week — based around a series of BBC2 shows about clogged arteries, bloated prostates, floppy penises and unpeopled semen — was that blokes are far too slow to see the quick. Similarly, tinnitus is a painful ailment, but it is almost inevitable, after last week's radio exhortations, that GPs will spend the next few weeks fielding inquiries from self-diagnosed sufferers who

merely need to turn down their Walkman or buy a packet of catarrh tablets from the chemist.

There are two main reasons for the current serious outbreak of Awareness. The first is a kind of general optimism, at least among the liberal establishment, in the improbability of humans. We are led to believe that, with the right kind of medical treatment or counselling, minds can be purged of sexism or racism or sexism, while bodies need no longer suffer impotence or tinnitus or incontinence. Eventually every "ism" and "itis" should be avoidable. This phenomenon follows from the large financial grants available, through both private and public funds, to charities, councils, research bodies, groups or indeed, the Department of Health itself, a keen promoter of Awareness.

In turn, these numerous organisations benefit from the second contributor — factor to the high current incidence of Awareness: the vast increase in media outlets, particularly on radio and television. This air-space needs to be filled but — because the very idea of "news" implies something typical and urgent — there needs to be a reason why a Monday story is going out on Monday. Incontinence or tinnitus would, in normal circumstances, be "timeless" (media slang for "useless"), but the declaration of a Day or Week gives them a foothold on the lower slopes of news lists.

For example, opening my

Complete Family Medical Encyclopedia at random, I discover Minamata Disease, a form of mercury poisoning from fish, first spotted in Japan. By playing on modern ecological concerns — the poisoning results from industrial pollution of water — the declaration of Minamata Awareness Day should, at the very least, ensure an interview with John Humphries on the Today programme.

Why, though, is the average person so susceptible to Awareness? Here, three environmental factors are to blame. The first is that, while their risks and incidence may be exaggerated by these campaigns, all of the conditions highlighted are real. In a radio programme last week, a GP, explaining the doctors' current sod-off campaign, objected that "there are no terri-

ble diseases that weren't around five years ago" and that "people know perfectly well by now the symptoms of the common cold and flu."

To which it must be objected that pre-Awareness, people simply did not know they were around and that it is a central tenet of the Awareness industry that victims or grieving relatives, when interviewed, always say, "I thought it was just flu." Almost no one who contacts a doctor with flu actually knows for certain that it is their problem. They think they are dying of meningitis, cardiac arrest, thrombosis, necrotising fasciitis or some other headline terror.

This unprecedented knowledge of potential illnesses — helped by the fact that Casu-

ality and Peak Practices and the rest put millions through a kind of Open University medical school — is joined by an avoidability culture. Forget Peps and Tassas: try to negotiate a deal where you get a pound for every time the phrase "This/These tragic deaths could have been avoided" is used in public. The motto of the modern newspaper reader or television viewer can only be: better unnecessary work for the doctor than painful employment for the coroner.

The third problem for doctors is a change in their social status. The Conservative health reforms, by encouraging the idea of patients as "customers", logically also promote the concept of doctors as sales staff, people whose comfort and opinion are secondary to those of the buyer. Thirty or 40 years ago, in the social structure of most towns and villages, calling out a doctor in the middle of the night was, for the average person, as frightening as phoning up the Pope. Now, it's like summoning a plumber and one who, with the NHS, costs no money. The Government has turned surgeries into shops and, like most shops nowadays, they're expected to be open longer hours.

It is easy to understand the anger of doctors, driving through cold and (their bags a junkie's paradise) often dangerous streets to tell someone that all they need is a lozenge or a hobby. But their campaign will fail. For children do die unnecessarily of meningitis and the graveyards groan and said they were sure the pain in their chest was flu.

And there is evidence — for example, the reports on drastically falling sperm counts which were part of Male Health Awareness Week — that our bodies are prey to new mutations and disturbances as a result of the way we live. In the face of all that, the GPs' Hypochondria Awareness Month is doomed.

Yesterday's Jerusalem bombing sparked immediate calls for a Palestinian clampdown. But, argues David Hirst, such measures may start a vicious circle which will break the Middle East peace process



Perils of peace

ALL you need is a detonator and the scum willing to kill themselves. Thus did Israel's chief of staff last week sum up the virtual impossibility of felling the Islamist militant prepared to commit suicide for his cause. Yet though the Israeli authorities made little secret of their fear that, after the double atrocity of a week ago, there would be more to come, the speed and devastation must have exceeded their worst fears.

All had seemed to be going as well as could be hoped for the "peace process" and Israeli Premier Shimon Peres and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, whose personal and political fortunes are so intimately intertwined with it.

But now both men's dreams are turning into a nightmare. Both, of course, desperately seek to preserve the peace process. Like Arafat before him, Peres needs to triumph in his elections in June in order to achieve that. The trouble now is, however, that the very methods which Peres must adopt — and insist that his peace-partner adopts too — threaten to undermine them both.

Peres faces a great irony. For so long as extremists on either side have the will to act, the mechanics of the peace process itself now assist them. The perpetrators of last week's bombings came from Hebron, still outside Arafat's control altogether. But the more territory Israel cedes to Arafat's

National Authority, the more territory there is for the "terrorists" to use as a haven.

The political consequences of Israel's difficulty in coping with such terror have rarely been more dangerous than they are today. Last week a mob shouted at the shaken Peres, "You will follow Rabin!" These, no doubt, were right wing fanatics but they reflected a general reversal of public sentiment that was immediately reflected in the opinion polls. Before those bombings Peres had been ahead of the Likud opposition by six points, but now they were neck and neck. Perhaps, the pollsters said, if there were no more outrages the pendulum would swing back again. But now?

Altogether, Hamas has killed some 120 Israelis in 15 suicide assaults since its campaign began. After each one Israel goes through the ritual of sealing off the occupied territories. It is both a necessary sop to Israeli opinion and a collective punishment of the Palestinians.

But until now it has always lifted the blockade in the end. For it knows that the Palestinians can no more tolerate an interminable closure than their own people can the terror. But it was becoming a vicious circle. Once the closure is lifted it enables the suicide bomber to infiltrate, but the longer it lasts the more it adds to the reservoir of terrorists, because terror feeds, not least, on the poverty and hardship the closure only

serves to increase. Peres cannot but be aware of this vicious circle. But now, in announcing his "total war" on Hamas, he is resorting to a desperate and long-contemplated policy of complete and permanent "separation" of Israel from the West Bank and Gaza. That is bad and contradictory enough. But, perhaps worse still, he is demanding of Arafat in the peace process the kind of action against his own people which could break him.

Since he established himself in Gaza, Arafat has undertaken campaigns of repression against Islamic militants which have earned him continuous reproaches from Palestinian, international and even Israeli human rights organisations. He has made himself the object of hatred at least as fierce as that which Peres has earned from his own extremists. When his police killed two activists in their homes, sympathisers staged demonstrations calling for his blood.

Yet even before yesterday's mayhem, both Israelis and Americans were demanding yet more of Arafat. Hamas is much more than its military extension. It is the whole social and religious infrastructure from which it springs, the whole climate of fervour by which it is inspired. In requiring, as he now does, that Arafat join him in his total war, Peres is clearly requiring him to strike at his political as well as military wing.

That is a very tall order. Even so Arafat, recognising yesterday's bombing as a "disaster", has promised a coordination or the Israeli government in stopping this horrible terrorist activity."

Polls do indeed show that an overwhelming majority of Palestinians oppose the terrorist tactics, largely because of the material hardships they bring in their wake. But as ever the Palestinian heart is in disagreement with the Palestinian head, and every strike is followed by unseemly rejoicing that extends well beyond the immediate family of the latest "martyr".

SUCH a climate there will always be at least a minority of Palestinians with the will to go on with a terror against which, as Israel's leading commentators acknowledge, there is no real deterrent. And nothing, tragically, will keep that will alive more than some of the steps which the two peace partners are now ready to take in the process.

There is Peres's threat to slow down the process itself; he has hinted that he may postpone the next stage, the Israeli army's withdrawal from Hebron. There is now the indefinite closure of the occupied territories and its economic consequences. But above all, perhaps, there is the deadly underground war between the Israeli security services and the Islamist militants. And here, Arafat

relentlessly tells Peres, the Israelis only have themselves to blame.

For the militants are not merely at loggerheads with Arafat. They are divided, among themselves, between the extreme and the yet more extreme. Arafat himself has made use of these divisions. In "reconciliation" talks between Hamas and his National Authority, Hamas promised a "ceasefire against the occupation authority" — provided only that Arafat "protect" their military fugitives from the Israelis.

It was the Israelis themselves who, in early January, broke this undeclared ceasefire when they booby trapped the most wanted fugitive of all, the engineer Yahya Ayash. The latest bombings were the inevitable, promised retaliation for that. But now the "cells of Yahya Ayash" have offered a three month ceasefire. The price is, however, that Israel must cease its operations against them in both Gaza and the West Bank, and Arafat must release all the military he has just imprisoned.

But Arafat has already served notice that, on Israel's behalf, he has no choice but to strike yet harder than ever. So the militants are most unlikely to let their ceasefire run its course, either against Arafat or Peres, and everyone now knows with what apparent ease and what devastating effect even the minority of a divided minority, just one man with a detonator, can break it.

Charity does not begin at the checkout



Ros Coward

LAST week a Sainsbury's cashier made the mistake of asking me whether I had any "schoolbags" to recycle. I must have looked a likely victim from the contents of my trolley. She was probably right, but for once my willingness to put my head into the yoke of any good cause abandoned me. Don't I do enough already? Here I was being asked to return a plastic bag to collect a voucher, which I could then pass on to some already over-burdened teacher to collect, so that she could apply for "anything from computers to crayons", as Sainsbury's proudly puts it.

Those who run such schemes do not expect negative reactions. Good Relations, the PR company responsible for Tesco's voucher scheme, told me that "anyone has got a real community spirit about this." Forget price wars, school voucher schemes are the hottest thing in retail PR, and all the major companies are anxious to get on the bandwagon.

Tesco's "computers for Schools" scheme is in its fifth year. Sainsbury's re-launches Schoolbags, its own version, today. Asda has just begun Best for Kids, another school computer scheme. A host of other major companies like Smiths, Boots and Dixons have had promotions based on school equipment.

With such eagerness to donate equipment to schools, perhaps the companies should just load up a juggernaut and leave the stuff on the school doorsteps. But that would miss the point. This is a marketing exercise and is part of marketing budgets not charitable donations. Without the cumbersome lubrication of women shoppers and teachers, creating a prolonged interaction with the company, the supermarkets would not be adequately recognised as investing in the local community.

Local community impact is now an essential part of marketing strategy. "The days are gone," says Alan Freese from Asda, "when we could just set up in a locality and expect everyone to come flocking in. There are so many supermarkets now that we have to think in terms of bringing something to a locality. You have to make sure you have campaigns which resonate at local level and leave a mark."

The marketing and PR people justify their interest in schools as having identified a real need in the local community. Sainsbury's put it rather grandly: "Anyone who has business in the community has a social responsibility to invest

in it. If schools have an obvious need, then they are an obvious place to invest." All this talk of the community rallying round local schools is in stark contrast to the Government's fingering of the same schools as staffed by incompetents and failing our children. So it would be nice to think business recognises the true importance (and plight) of schools.

But the truth is less palatable. Schools are being used to woo customers, a development already causing public disquiet. Even more, schools represent the last places where the idea of community idealised by supermarkets still exists.

Most other community foci have been destroyed, and supermarkets themselves have played a major part in that destruction. Bankrupting local shops and encouraging reliance on cars, huge stores have undercut local communities. Women are particularly affected; they are less likely to have cars, more likely to feel marginalised when smaller communities disappear.

Schools remain that smaller scale community focus, and with it a readiness to engage in collective projects. These vestigial communities already rely heavily on extra work by teachers and women, especially community spirit, to predominate in fundraising, trying to patch the gaps where local provision has failed. Women involve themselves in attempts to improve road safety, to launch school recycling schemes, in short to do the additional things needed for a sense of cohesion when society as a whole provides so little. It is precisely this commitment by school voucher schemes.

SUE O'Brien of Sainsbury's told me that they attribute part of the success of these schemes to a willingness to participate in something that matters for the community. "People ask themselves if they can be bothered to collect tokens for themselves, count their stack and cash them in. But if they take them to schools, it's a painless way of making a contribution."

Patness? Teachers are already overloaded: collecting statistics, administering SATS, juggling shrinking budgets and justifying themselves to Ofsted. Why add to the load, when supermarkets could make a direct contribution to local schools? Why not sponsor something like the reading recovery scheme, one of the many services disappearing in the latest cuts?

So how did I react at my local checkout? This time I grumpily declined to sponsor a school rubber. Last year this same supermarket was commended with the reality of community relations. A neglected scholastic with a grudge against BMW's murdered a woman in the car park. Next time I might make a similar protest: subsidising the manager with said bags, perhaps?

Advertisement for Voluntary Euthanasia Society. Text: "If you care about a better life, don't you care about a better death?" Includes a form for joining the society and a "FREE ADVANCE DIRECTIVE" stamp.

10 OBITUARIES

Marguerite Duras

Passion into prose

MARGUERITE Duras, who has died aged 81, was one of post-war France's most gifted and fiercely independent creative talents. She was born Marguerite Donnadieu in Giadinh, near Saigon in French Indo-China. As a girl, she spoke fluent Vietnamese and save for occasional visits to the Gascon village of Duras (which she took as her *nom-de-plume*), she lived and was educated in the Far East until she was 16 when she returned to France to study mathematics and law at the Sorbonne.

In 1935, she became a civil servant in the French Colonial Office. Three years later, she married the left-wing intellectual Robert Antier, from whom she separated in 1946. Her first book, *Les Impudents*, was published in 1943 as a result of the personal intervention of Raymond Queneau.

By this stage of the war, she was a resistance fighter, and an existentialist resistance circles: on one occasion she kept watch while Camus retrieved important papers from a house and claimed later to have saved the life of the then resistance fighter, Francis Mitterand. After the Liberation, she remained on the edges of the smart factions, and was expelled from the Communist Party in 1949 with other "bourgeois individualists". It was then that she consolidated her highly personal notion of total revolution based on personal freedom.

During the 1950s a series of elliptical novels led her to be associated with the "new realism" movement, though it



Feminist icon and symbol of uncompromising French style... Marguerite Duras

was the film *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959), directed by Alain Resnais from a Duras script, which gave her an international reputation. During the 1960s, she continued to pare her fiction to essentials, but with *Le Ravissement de Lol V Stein* (1964) she delved deep into her psyche in a way which she described as emotionally dangerous for her. Meanwhile, she raised her political profile by opposing France's Algerian policy and was an enthusiastic supporter of the student revolution in 1968 which she translated into politico-personal terms in *Détruire, Dit-Elle* (1969).

By this time, she had widened her range to include theatre and cinema and, in 1971, gave up the novel to write a series of brief, opaque fictions which even admirers found difficult. Then, when she seemed in danger of losing contact with her public, she wrote *L'Amant* (The Lover), a lucid evocation of her adolescence which won her not only the Prix Goncourt in 1984 but a new, young audience which warmed to her strange, "impossible" world.

She was regularly accused, even by the French, of intellectualism, though this is a difficult charge to substantiate. Generalisations were not her style and though she regularly expressed views, sometimes wildly, to journalists, she was one of the few modern French writers never to publish a literary, philosophical or political manifesto. Her ideas are embedded in her unemphatic fictions, which

may lack warmth and human feeling but swell with passionate involvement. Her texts are the legs of icebergs which lurk beneath the polished surface of her exact, understated prose.

Her "texts", which are simultaneously novels, film-scripts and plays, deal in disquieting terms with a world of highly personal myths: the dam raised by her mother against the Pacific tides, the figure of a beggar-god who stands for the poverty and degradation of the East. She communicated a sense of the "impossible" through incantatory symbols of sea and forest which turn her prose into poetry. But above all she developed the notion of existential being into a concept of the sacred which, in many ways, is the key to her work: the rational world denies these human and "communiting" values which equate the per-

William Nyuon Bany

Warlord of the Sudan

THE career of Commander William Nyuon Bany, who has been killed in his mid-sixties in Upper Nile province, southern Sudan, symbolised the chaos and suffering of one of the longest-lasting, least-reported African wars. He had no formal education — he was illiterate and could barely write his name — but he was a highly effective, much-feared guerrilla leader and local warlord.

For most of his life he fought in the wild expanses of the Nile's eastern bank in the extreme south of Sudan. The local people, animists or Christians, regard themselves as part of black sub-Saharan Africa, not the Arab, Islamic north. There has been civil war for all but 10 of the 39 years since Sudanese independence, and Nyuon's campaigns, and his shifting alliances were important in the south's struggle to escape the north's domination.

The current phase of Sudan's civil war started 12 years ago, when Khartoum abolished the region's autonomy and introduced Islamic sharia law in the north, sending shudders through the Christian community. It has intensified since an Islamic fundamentalist military government took control in Khartoum in 1989.

The scene since then has been complicated by a split in Colonel John Garang's rebel Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA), and the emergence of militias, with every group vying for power. The SPLA wings seem to spend more time attacking each other than the government forces — which were happy to fight militias, if this prolonged their internecine fighting. Khartoum hoped they could outwit the other players in this brutal game, and achieve his ambitions for the south. Before his death it had seemed he might be edging towards success.

His military career started when he joined the pre-independence Sudanese army in 1966. This brought none of the benefits he'd hoped for, and he deserted to join the Anya Nya rebellion, which ended with the concessions on regional autonomy granted with the 1972 Addis Ababa peace accord.

Nyuon returned to the regular army, as a major, but quit again in 1983 when the current million started, becoming a key member of Garang's forces. Coming from the Nuer tribe, with his base in East Equatoria province, he was a useful addition to Garang's largely Dinka support, and he was trusted by Garang to lead the SPLA delegation to the failed 1992 peace talks with the Sudanese government.

Soon after this he quit Garang to join the new SPLA United faction — later renamed the SSIM, the Southern Sudanese Independence Movement — led by fellow Nuer, Riek Machar, who was accused by Garang of links with the Khartoum government. Nyuon's militia distanced themselves from Machar, apparently established their own links with Khartoum, and accepted his enemy's help, as he tried to destroy Garang's forces, believing that that Garang was the wrong man to lead the rebellion.

For three years Garang and Nyuon's guerrillas chased each other around southern Sudan. When I visited Nyuon's base in the remote village of Lafon two years ago, I was told that his switch of allegiance had brought only hardship to local people. The Khartoum forces had rarely come near, but now local people were subject to Garang's revenge attacks. On Garang's side, there were similar complaints about Nyuon. Khartoum must have been other around southern Sudan. When I visited Nyuon's base in the remote village of Lafon two years ago, I was told that his switch of allegiance had brought only hardship to local people. The Khartoum forces had rarely come near, but now local people were subject to Garang's revenge attacks. On Garang's side, there were similar complaints about Nyuon. Khartoum must have been other around southern Sudan.

Audrey Angers

Scope for charity

ONE DAY in 1947 Audrey Angers, a short-hand typist with a Liverpool shipping firm, applied for help from a cerebral palsy sufferer in the weekly magazine *Picture Post*. Angers, who has died aged 76, had cerebral palsy all her life. She responded to his letter, and a friendship that lasted for almost half a century.

Initially she wrote an open letter to the National Cripples Journal which brought her into contact with Margaret Mather, Manchester typist and a Croydon dressmaker, Kathleen Brain. The three women — who all had cerebral palsy — produced a magazine, the first edition was published in 1948. "Staring problems and standing together," ran its motto, "inspires confidence." With the 12th issue Audrey Angers took over as editor.

Through her efforts, the Liverpool Spastics Fellowship was formed in 1949 and organised a Blackpool holiday camp for the first time. Out of that came a Croydon branch of the fellowship. Thus the work spread and in 1953 the national Spastics Society was formed. Audrey organised Fellowship outings, and in 1954 bought a centre at Alg-



Cerebral palsy victim, Angers nursed Liverpool for 800. In 1958 the old centre was sold, at a profit, and Mayfield a large building overlooking Penny Lane was purchased. It became Angers House, a residential home for handicapped people of all ages. For three decades from 1959, when the first eight residents arrived, it was a real home. I went there regularly as a carol singer and have wonderful memories, both of its atmosphere and of the care given to the children. When she was a child, Audrey recalled, she would walk on her toes like "a wobbly ballet dancer" although her father had her "marching around like a soldier". She was a woman of tremendous courage, a real determined figure with a passionate heart who loved Liverpool.

D Ben Ross
Audrey Angers, charity pioneer, born July 6, 1919; February 26, 1996

Henry Guinness

Keeping the faith in China

HENRY Guinness, died aged 67 in Kent, 30 years after he decided to become a missionary. He joined the China Inland Mission (now OMF International) and sailed from Tilbury with 70 other new recruits. In China he proved a popular preacher, attracting listeners by playing a concert. Guinness worked first with a converted opium addict and later an ex-burglar whom he had made read from John's gospel when he broke into his house. The man became a committed Christian, and later accompanied Guinness in his missionary work.

In 1938, Guinness married Dr Mary Taylor and they moved to Kaifeng where Mary worked in the hospital which Guinness's father had founded. After the bombing of Pearl Harbour, they moved to Xiangcheng where drought, famine, inflation and flood were followed by a plague of locusts of almost biblical proportions. Unable to feed their families, many in Xiangcheng abandoned their children some of whom the Guinnesses rescued. Hundreds of thousands of people, including two of their own sons, Gerald and Reginald, died. As the Japanese closed in on Xiangcheng, the Guinnesses with their remaining son, Oswald, fled first to India then back to England.

After the war the Guinnesses returned to China, working primarily among students in Nanjing, where they started a Bible study group. However, the days of foreign missionaries were numbered. The Guinnesses managed to escape for two years of the foundation of the People's Republic of China, but they were under virtual house arrest.

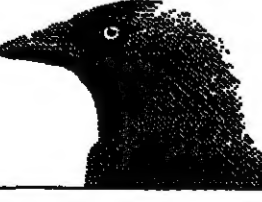
They spent several years in Glasgow but then returned to Asia, using dispensers in Malaysia and later Taiwan. Their routine was to rise at four and travel all day, exhorting, encouraging and preaching the gospel.

In 1976, aged 67, Guinness finally retired. His wife died in 1989 and he spent his last years in Kent. Not long before he died, he returned to his beloved China, meeting many in Honan who remembered him fondly. Sadly, however, he was unable to find the graves of the two sons he lost some 60 years earlier.

Guinness witnessed tremendous suffering and yet lived out his faith to the end — the very antithesis of what a 19th-century Christian referred to when praying: "Lord deliver us from sullen saints!"

Gary Clayton
Henry Guinness, missionary, born April 18, 1908; died February 17, 1996

Jackdaw



Girlzone

LLAY IN bed that night wondering what it would be like to go on a date with Ronan [from the pop group Boyzone]... Then I felt really sad because I knew we'd never meet. And even if we did, he'd think I was too young. In the end I cried myself to sleep.

The next morning the first thing that came into my head was the way Ronan looked in the Key To My Life video. I watched it over and over again to get the look on his face clearly in my head. I pictured him day and night... Then something happened that made me feel even more confused. One night I was watching TV when Top Gun came on. I'd never seen Tom

out of his own insecurities or his own jealousy.

Veve Banton's words, as spoken to Anna Deane Smith for the New Yorker's women's issue. Banton is one of several women prisoners held in the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women interviewed by Smith. Banton is in prison for being an accomplice in the murder of her daughter by her boyfriend.

Soft eggs
LIKE MOST children, I was once tempted to become a magician. The temptation came in the form of a rather crude "How-to" booklet, in which the only really compelling trick was how to get a whole egg into a bottle without breaking it. I never tried it out, though: I did not believe in it. I did not believe because the implications of believing were dangerous. If it did work, I would be subject to a magic far greater and darker than the banal card-and-coin tricks the booklet could teach me. I would no longer be the "magician" — the trick would be on me. The egg trick was in fact a small matter of kitchen chemistry, but before a cer-

tain age, chemistry — the inexplicable workings of matter — the magic. Disconnection of known connections. Connections where there should have been none. Safer, then, not to believe.

According to the booklet, this is how you get a whole egg into a bottle: you soak the egg in vinegar until the shell is soft like rubber, then roll it into a narrow sausage, slip it down the bottleneck and add water. After a while, when it has regained its original shape, you discard the water. I was reminded of this profound transformation when I first saw an object by the Swedish artist Eva Löfdahl in which a white stone ball, approximately the size of an egg, is contained within a bottle. Except that the bottle has been broken, then glued back together around the ball.

Pop! Pop! Pop!
FINDINGS: Congress finds that —
a) Popcorn is an important food that is a valuable part of the human diet...
DEFINITIONS:
1) BOARD — The term "Board" means the Popcorn Board, established under section 905.
2) COMMERCE — The term "commerce" means interstate, foreign, or intrastate commerce.
3) CONSUMER INFORMATION — The term "consumer information" means information and programmes that will assist consumers and other persons in making evaluations and decisions regarding the purchase, preparation and use of popcorn.
4) PERSON — The term "person" means an individual, group of individuals, partnership, corporation, association, or cooperative, or any other legal entity.
5) POPCORN — The term "popcorn" means unpopped corn.
That US Federal Popcorn legislation in full, courtesy of the New York Times.

Design news
Hi! I usually don't like writing letters to magazines 'cause I usually feel stupid 'cause nobody ever reads my mail. But I just felt like writ-

Birthdays

Michael Barrett ("Shakin' Stevens"), rock singer, 48; Nicholas Coleridge, publisher and writer, managing director, Condé Nast, 39; Kenny Dalglish, football manager, 45; Graham Dowling, New Zealand cricketer, 58; Prof Hans Eysenck, psychologist, 80; Jeff Grayson, rugby league player, 47; Dave Green, jazz bassist, 54; Harvey Goldsmith, impresario, 78; Wendy Dagworthy, musical director, Covent Garden, 67; Patsy Kensit, actress, singer, 28; Francis King, author and critic, 73; Stuart Mawson, otolaryngologist, 76; Patrick Moore, astronomer, 78; Wendy Dagworthy, Prew, fashion designer, 46; Irina Ratushinskaya, Soviet dissident and poet, 42; Chris Rea, rock guitarist, 46; Don Rendell, saxophonist, 70; Alan Sillitoe, playwright, novelist, 68; Peter Skellern, composer and singer, 49.

Letter

Professor Alan Alexander writes: I taught with Ivan Hammarford (obituary, February 27) for three years in a small department of a small Ontario university. He was a charming, amusing and a colleague and, as a scholar working on a single consuming idea, did not fit the already developing "publish or perish, even if it's not ready" school of thought that was being almost completely overtaken the tradition of reflective individual scholarship.

In discussions with him, nearly 30 years ago, it was clear that his intellectual curiosity was being commanded by a developing conviction that scholars and politicians had been for decades mis-using and abusing the word, and the idea of "race".

It is good to know that his memories will be the long awaited major work on the subject.

In Memoriam

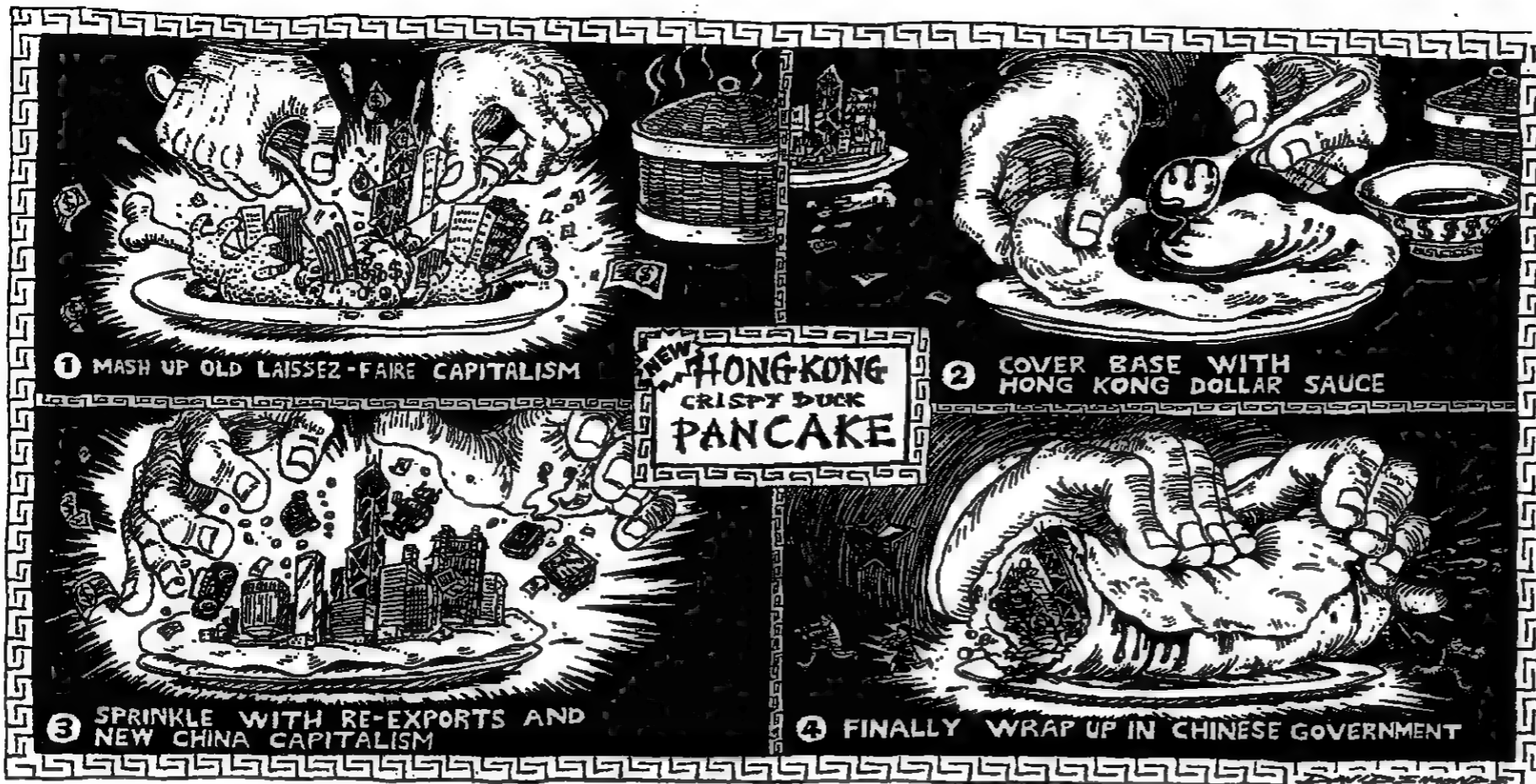
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Week of reports from Hong Kong begins with analysis of financial ferment and debate about post-1997 prospects

Myths that lay claim to a colonial miracle



Hong Kong: Enter the Dragon

ON JUNE 30 next year the Union Flag will be lowered over Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China will take control of the relentlessly capitalist colony on its southern tip.

Under Britain's relatively benign rule, Hong Kong has become the Manhattan of the Pacific Rim, attracting the great financial and investment institutions of Europe, North America and Asia, turning it into the key commercial and trading centre for the region.

The colony's flagship HongkongBank, based in a glass tower designed by Sir Norman Foster, is the most profitable in the world. But its home is now dwarfed by the Bank of China.

Despite the impending handover, foreign investment in infrastructure — from the new Chep Lap Kok Airport to real estate in the exclusive Peak District — continues to pour in and per capita income has risen to \$17,842 (\$11,510), just a shade below that of the UK and hugely out of line with the \$494 per annum per capita income in China. Hong Kong business and finance has convinced itself that it can survive the transition to Beijing rule and that the miracle can go on.

China has key role in seeming triumph of western style low-tax capitalism, writes Will Hutton

FOR the past 30 years Hong Kong has been asking what will happen on July 1, 1997 when it reverts to Chinese rule. Yet much of the debate has been founded on myth bordering on a lie. The fear has been that communist China must necessarily extinguish the free-market capitalism on which Hong Kong's dynamism is based. But while Hong Kong's growth has been extraordinary, the process has been more complex and subtle than is wholly explicable in terms of low taxation, free markets and lack of state intervention.

In the first place, both its success and its fate have always been tethered to its geography. Hong Kong's prosperity is founded on its possession of the finest deep-sea port along the South China coast — and the unique focus it implies for the physical movement of goods in and out of the mainland. The gross value of the re-export

goods from China is alone worth more than 80 per cent of GDP. This is the heart of Hong Kong capitalism.

Had British rule remained, and the booming Guangdong province to which it is adjacent collapsed into political chaos, the 100 million peasant migrants searching for work proved unassimilable, the impact would have spilled over the border to Hong Kong.

Nor is the succession to Deng Xiaoping, the 81-year-old Chinese leader, anything that Hong Kong could have regarded with indifference. Whether as a focal point for inward investment to China or as site of the stock market on which Chinese companies can get external capital, it matters profoundly that China remains wedded to the policy of trying to develop market socialism. If it relapses into old-style command communism, the Hong Kong economy will implode — and it won't matter a jot that the economy has flexible

wages and prices. Thus to present Hong Kong as a free-market success story independent from events in its hinterland is disingenuous. The wave of industrialisation that took place in the 1950s was not because the colony offered low taxation; it was because two million refugees from Mao's China set up shop in Hong Kong to undertake the export business that the UN trade embargo would not allow in China.

In Hong Kong, they found a British colonial government that was prepared to run an economy wholly in the interests of business and free from any democratic pressure to alleviate the chronic exploitation of the labour force or improve social conditions.

As with all successful capitalist economies, the process was more subtle than just profit. The Hong Kong government has never been about the kind of free contracting in open markets that neo-classical economists advocate. The essential ingredient is the establishment of business and free trade over time, the creation of business franchises cemented by blood ties.

This has been aided and abetted by a banking system perhaps even more supportive than that of any other enterprise than those in Germany and Japan. Hong Kong

Playing with all the aces

Briefing
Richard Thomas

THE economic vibrancy of Hong Kong so excited commentator Professor Alvin Rabushka that he declared "Happy Kingdom — UK — Unhappy Kingdom".

Some of the colony's poorest workers might take issue with Prof Rabushka's view, which was based on his admiration for Hong Kong's free market. Nonetheless, Hong Kong's story is mostly one of success: a lower infant mortality rate than Britain, life-spans bettered only by the Japanese, and an economic growth rate — between 1982 and 1994 — of an average of 9 per cent a year.

The territory has had three advantages, and has exploited them all to the full. The first is the ready availability of cheap, flexible labour. Every worker is protected by a system of regulation that is minimal, unemployment benefit non-existent, and wages low.

Mr K Y Tang, the government's economic adviser, sees the current jobless rate of 3.5 per cent as actually representing "quite a bit of slack". Imagine a 3 per cent jobless rate being described as slack in the UK!

But the third cornerstone of Hong Kong's emergence as an Asian tiger is very British: devaluation. The Hong Kong dollar has been falling since the end of the second world

Survival's easy — with good faith

Debate 1
Ken Davies

AFTER reverting to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997, Hong Kong will adapt and survive. There will probably be a flurry of emigration in 1997, prompting higher saving and lower consumer spending, but if the transition is smooth, spending will revive and growth rates of 5 per cent plus will return.

Hong Kong is already the "New York of South China" providing investment funds and management services to neighbouring Guangdong, a rapidly industrialising province with a population of 67 million. Industries built up in Hong Kong in the Fifties on the back of sweated immigrant labour have decamped to China to take advantage of cheap land and labour made available when Deng Xiaoping opened the door to trade in the late 1970s. Some three million workers in Guangdong turn out products for Hong Kong firms to export.

Hong Kong's adaptability is based on economic institutions that will remain largely unchanged after 1997. The 1984 Joint Declaration and the post-1997 mini-constitution, the Basic Law, commit the new administration to the existing free enterprise, free trade, low tax, minimum regulation environment, complete with a Currency Board and its own currency, the Hong Kong dollar.

It would, though, be unrealistic to expect no tinkering with the existing "positive non-interventionism". The new regime may feel compelled to offer increased welfare benefits to appease a population deprived of democratic reforms. There is also likely to be some move towards Singapore's more interventionist approach. But

London ready to take on mantle

Worm's eye
Dan Atkinson

FOR years, the idea of Britain taking on the mantle of Hong Kong of Europe" has been bandied about, usually as a thought-free shorthand for dynamism, enterprise and other guff. The time has come for a more realistic application.

Top companies cheerfully break themselves up into "focused" entities, so why not national states, particularly when the submergence of incompatible units into one grouping puts the country's stock at a heavy discount?

The world will need another Hong Kong and we are going to provide it. In 1997, the City of London should be spun off as a sovereign off-shore territory with the Lord Mayor as boss-man. It will levy few taxes, hold no elections and provide zero welfare services.

The currency will be the guinea, in tribute to the extra 5 per cent City types rook out of their punters.

At a stroke, the striped-shirts will lose the embarrassing encumbrance of a clapped-out industrial hinterland and 60 million odd deadbeats while, across the frontier, normal people will be spared having their jobs, mortgages and everyday existences rearranged every five minutes to placate "market sentiment". Our national schizophrenia will be cured by surgery.

Fixing the border will require a once-for-all vote, district by district. At a guess, much of the South-east will throw in its lot with the City-state; Essex can provide the New Territories.

By chance, 1999 will see China subsume the crazy,

Short shrift for 3.5m in second class

Debate 2
Emily Lau

JOHN Major's visit to Hong Kong this week may well be the last time a British Prime Minister visits the colony. With 486 days to go before the Chinese takeover on July 1, 1997, there is a growing feeling that the British are irrelevant.

However, the Prime Minister can use his visit to convince the disillusioned Hong Kong people that London still cares about the colony. Or he may use the occasion to repeat the official line that there is nothing Britain can do for us.

While Hong Kong people may be cautiously optimistic about the colony's short-term economic prospects there is nagging concern about rising unemployment and inflation. Since corruption is rampant in China, increased cross-border commercial activities also raise the spectre of a resurgence in local corruption.

When I meet the Prime Minister at Government House, I shall remind him yet again of Britain's moral responsibility for the Hong Kong people, particularly the 3.5 million second class citizens who have been abandoned by Britain.

Many of us in Hong Kong feel that Parliament's refusal to grant full citizenship to the Hong Kong British subjects is related to race rather than to numbers. After all, millions of people (mainly Caucasians) from North America, Australia and the European Union have unrestricted access to the United Kingdom even though they are not British citizens.

Hong Kong people lost their full British citizenship in 1982 when Parliament passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act. We were further downgraded to second class status by the Nationality Act of 1981. These successive acts have stirred up resentment and hostility in Hong Kong. They also signalled to Peking that

Indicators

TODAY — UK: Official Reserves (Feb).
THURSDAY — UK: Provisional MO (Feb).
UK: Personal Consumption (Jan).
UK: Personal Income (Jan).
UK: Industrial Production (Jan).
TODAY — US: Manufacturing Orders (Jan).
US: 10 Presidential Primaries & Caucuses.
WEDNESDAY — US: New Home Sales (Jan).

FR: Consumer Confidence (Feb).
THURSDAY — US: Leading Indicators (Jan).
UK: Unemployment (Feb).
GER: GDP (Q4).
UK: Chancellor/Governor Meeting.
UK: CBI Distributive Trade Survey (Feb).
FRIDAY — US: Non-Farm Payrolls (Feb).
UK: Unemployment Rate (Feb).
Source: HSBC Markets Research

Tourist rates — bank sells

Australia 1.94	France 7.47	Italy 2.335	Singapore 2.71
Austria 15.26	Germany 2.18	Malta 0.54	South Africa 5.78
Belgium 44.95	Greece 368.00	Netherlands 2.4500	Spain 184.00
Canada 2.0450	Hong Kong 11.88	New Zealand 2.21	Sweden 10.15
Cyprus 0.6975	India 53.08	Norway 9.57	Switzerland 1.750
Denmark 8.48	Ireland 0.9600	Portugal 228.00	Turkey 98.985
Finland 6.90	Israel 4.74	Saudi Arabia 5.71	USA 1.4950

Supplied by HSBC Bank (excluding India, Greece and Saudi Arabia) as at close of business on Friday.

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4th March 1996

Boxing

I may come back, says beaten Benn

Kevin Mitchell hopes a once-great champion keeps his promise to retire after this sad defeat



Salute of the gladiators... Malinga and Benn, winner and loser, touch gloves in mutual respect after their world-title fight

AFTER THE tears, the fears. Having announced his retirement as early as dramatic a fashion as most at ringside could remember - bruised, beaten and trembling with emotion, his bride-to-be by his side - Nigel Benn now threatens to change his mind. If he is as intimidated yesterday, he goes back on the promise he made to a visibly moved audience of 10,000 after losing his world title at the Newcastle Arena on Saturday night and it would not be out of character - Benn risks surrendering more than his credibility. At risk are his health, his reputation and the support of his girlfriend Caroline, who has begged him to walk away from the dangerous but lucrative trade he has practised for nine years. His theatrical proposal to her on bended knee in front of the TV cameras may have been the start of a very brief engagement.

"I acted in an emotional state," he said yesterday. "I'm going on holiday to think about it and talk it over with Caroline. I'll also talk to my manager Peter DeFretas and my trainer Kevin Sanders." They all want him to quit. So does his father. Perhaps, also, he should listen to his conscience, four years older than him at 36 but the fresher, sharper man over Saturday's 12 tense, ragged rounds. Thelma "Sugar Boy" Malinga, the new owner of Benn's World Boxing Council super-middleweight belt, said after his 118-109, 115-112, 113-114 split points victory that he welcomed Benn's decision to quit. "Nigel has been one of the great champions and I respect him tremendously." Benn did not take a terrible beating, by any means - indeed he had the South African down for a count in round five that, in earlier times, would have signalled one of his spectacular comebacks - but his work bore all the marks of decline. Slow to the punch, walking through the jab and giving away round after round, he was being wobbled by a light hitter. Malinga has stopped only 17 of 50 opponents, just seven of them on clean count-outs. Benn has become a dangerously vulnerable commodity against quality fighters, and given the several epic fights in which he has been involved (Anthony Logan, Michael Watson, Doug De Witt, Iran Barkley, Chris Eubank and, unfortunately, Gerald McClellan), talk of a big money pairing with the awesome Roy Jones jr, once fanciful, is now preposterous. Thoughts of a third meeting with the retired Eubank also ought to be shelved. Even before his right eye was thumped shut in the

fourth round, Benn's range and rhythm were shot. Physically up but spiritually flat, he felt this contest was not a big enough challenge for him. "I was pleased," he said. "I thought it was going to be an easy night" - the words of a man hooked on fighting, a blood junkie. Benn's biggest battle, as it has always been, was with himself. After losing to Eubank in 1990 he said he would retire; after surviving the dreadful ordeal against McClellan he said there would be three more fights, and this was the third. "It was never going to be easy for Benn to quit. His was always an instinctive rather than acquired hunger to fight, honed in 1989 where the street was his first gym. He loved a 'tear-up'. He was variously 'The Dark Destroyer', and latterly, 'The Warrior'." Of the 20 claimants to 12-stone's supremacy since the division was introduced in 1984, Benn ranks not far behind the very best - Joseph Sugar Ray, Leonard, Thomas Hearn, Michael Num - and ahead of most of his contemporaries. He could be compared favourably with the dozen or so genuine world champions among the 68 listed in 16 weight classes of the four governing bodies. He triumphed in spite of his vulnerability; he might yet suffer horribly for it.

Tale of the Dark Destroyer's tape

Born: Iford, Essex, January 22 1964. Amateur career: Won the ABA middleweight title. Declined a place in the 1986 Commonwealth Games team when dropped after failing to turn up for training. Turned pro 1987. Phase I: Only two opponents of first 22 west past second round. Trainer Brian Lynch barred sparring. Knocked out by Michael Watson 1989 and went to America. Phase II: Won WBO middleweight title. Returned, switched trainers, stopped by Chris Eubank 1990, announced retirement. Phase III: Moved up to 12 stone, reigned with authority as WBC champion

Racing

Bailey waits on Weld and Dunwoody

Chris Hawkins
WITH the Cheltenham Festival just eight days away, many crucial riding arrangements remain in abeyance following the sad injuries to Norman Williamson and Adrian Maguire on Friday. Richard Dunwoody is the key figure and the obvious replacement for Williamson on Alderbrook in the Champion Hurdle but at the moment a gentleman's agreement is standing in his way. Dunwoody has a verbal contract to ride for Dermot Weld who still has the injury plagued Fortune and Fame in the Champion Hurdle. Noel Chance, trainer of Mr Mulligan, not favouring the Sun Alliance, was worried that Nicholson might exercise his claim on Richard Johnson but that will not be the case. "I promised Richard he could ride the horse at Cheltenham and I'm sticking to that," said Nicholson. "I've booked Dunwoody for Hill of Tulloh in the Sun Alliance but haven't decided yet whether St Mellion Fairway will run in the race - he needs good ground." Nicholson has also secured Dunwoody for Martin's Lamp in the Grand Annual. Charlie Swan rides Viking Flagship in the Queen Mother Champion Chase, while Johnson has so far not got a jockey for the enigmatic Barton Bank in the Gold Cup. Andy Turnbull may be looking for a rider for Squire Silk in the Champion Hurdle following the two-day ban imposed on Paul Carberry by Saturday for excessive use of the whip on Zambarra. Carberry is contemplating lodging an appeal.

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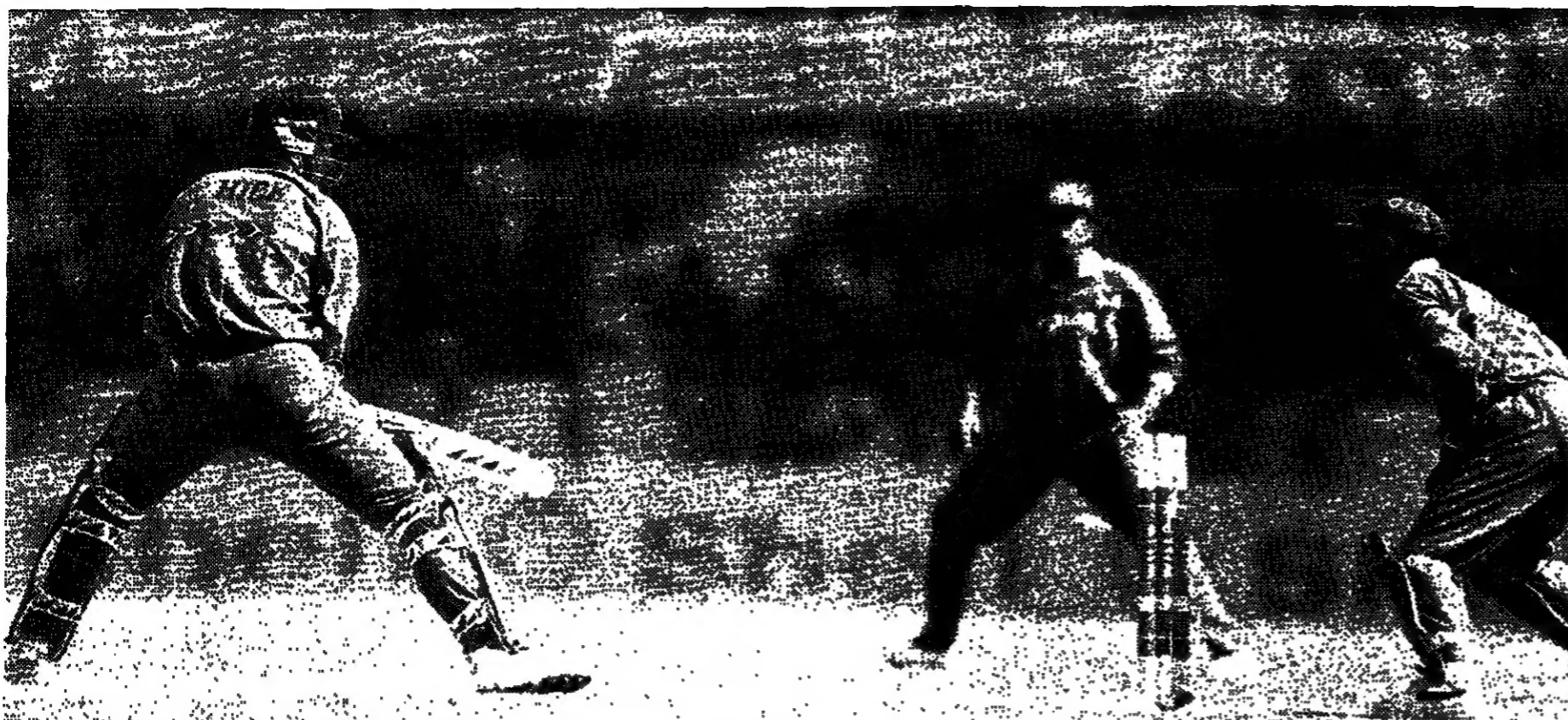
Advertisement for sailing, featuring a photo of a woman and the text 'Sailing McLean has a real winner'.

Advertisement for RACELINE, featuring a photo of a horse and the text 'CIGAR, America's leading horse last year, continues to recover from a setback'.

RUGBY UNION: the strangling of Scotland's Grand Slam hopes, page 12
BOXING: Nigel Benn loses, retires . . . and then has second thoughts, page 13

SportsGuardian

JOY FOR JAVED AS PAKISTAN INFLICT ANOTHER WORLD CUP DEFEAT



Out of his ground . . . Graeme Hick is stumped for one by Latif off the bowling of Sohail and yet another England collapse has begun

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBS KINNAIRD

Group B: Pakistan v England

England fail their openers

Scoreboard

Table with 2 columns: Team and Score. Includes England and Pakistan scores for the match.

Mike Selvey in Karachi sees the same old story after Atherton and Smith set the pace

ALL the ifs and buts of England's qualifying matches were sorted out in the National Stadium yesterday when a thumping drive from Inzamam-ul-Haq, on his 28th birthday, whisked back past the bowler Dermot Reeve and careered over the ropes on the long-on boundary.

It took Inzamam to his half-century and, more importantly, gave Pakistan victory in England's last qualifier by seven wickets. England have finished last of the qualifiers and must go to Faisalabad, where next Saturday they will play Sri Lanka in the first quarter-final.

was always gettable." So he must have been turning mental cartwheels when Mike Atherton won the toss and decided to bat first. For the first 20 overs, during which Atherton, happily restored to some sort of fluency, and Robin Smith, finally given a chance at the expense of Alec Stewart, were putting on 147 for the first wicket, it had looked as if it might be England's day. Runs came from the feared Akram and Waqar Younis, and Mushtaq Ahmed's world-class leg-spin was treated with such contempt that his first five overs disappeared for 39 runs.

But there was work to be done now, and although Graham Thorpe and Neil Fairbrother set about rebuilding things with a fourth-wicket stand of 36, Akram was marshalling his bowlers well and England were pegged back. It was the reintroduction of Mushtaq which proved decisive, for his second five-over spell cost only 14 runs at a time when acceleration was required. It also accounted for Fairbrother, Russell and Reeve, and Cork was leg-bereft to Waqar's wicked yorker.

Those four wickets in 25 balls removed all impetus from the innings and it was only through Thorpe's 52 from 64 balls and some cheerful clumping from Gough that England managed to bat out their overs. By this time England would have realised that the pitch held no hidden menace, that they were 30 runs at least short of a score - given their start - and that early wickets were essential if Pakistan were not to take the game at a canter.

Premiership: Liverpool 3, Aston Villa 0

Quick-fire Liverpool closing fast

Ian Ross

THE role of dark horse is filled uncomfortably by Liverpool, and nearing the finishing post their pace is quickening. This victory of great authority and composure leaves them only six points adrift of Newcastle and within touching distance of Manchester United.

But only 79 seconds had passed when they were first undone. Barnes's looping flick into the heart of the penalty area may have been delivered more in hope than in expectation but it fell delightfully for Steve McManaman, who drilled his shot just inside a post.

Bosnich was still attempting to instil a sense of order into those in front of him when Liverpool struck again three minutes later. No nifty teamwork this time, just the instinctive brilliance of Robbie Fowler, who may yet be the player to watch this summer's European Championship finals from his armchair.

The striker's 28th goal of the season was sublime. He slipped his marker, Staunton, as a mouse does a cat and his shot from 30 yards flew home. His 28th, two minutes later, was rather less glamorous, an angled drive which Bosnich misjudged.

The afternoon had peaked early and what followed provided nothing to match the first glorious minutes. Southgate struck the bar with a header and Milosevic missed his customary sitter as Villa tried to save face.

Liverpool's title odds have been cut from 9-2 to 3-1 by William Hill, which also quotes them at 15-1 for the Premiership-FA Cup double. Hill's makes Newcastle 4-7 title favourites, with Manchester United the 3-1 joint second favourites.

Liverpool: James McAtee, Wright (Pen), Appiah, Smith, Babb, Scales, Jones, McManaman, Thomas, Barnes, Collymore (Sub), St. Peter.

Aston Villa: Bosnich, Charles, Scott, Taylor, Bunn, Wright, Farnley, Townsend, Staunton, Isaacson, Milosevic, York.

Referee: N. Cooper (Pontypool)

Photograph and more soccer, page 14



Fowler . . . sublime strike

Leonard faces ban for punching Wainwright

Robert Armstrong
JASON LEONARD may miss England's Triple Crown decider against Ireland at Twickenham on Saturday week, after being cited by the Scottish Rugby Union for throwing a punch in England's 18-9 victory at Murrayfield.

stamped on the England forward Ben Clarke during the game in Paris in January. England could hardly be seen to condone foul play by one of their players while condemning an offence by an opponent. Had Leonard been sent off for punching he would probably have been suspended for the recommended 30 days.

The citing law states: "When a player commits an act of foul play not detected by match officials, either of the unions have the discretion to cite that player to show cause why he should not be held accountable in the same way as a player who has been ordered off."

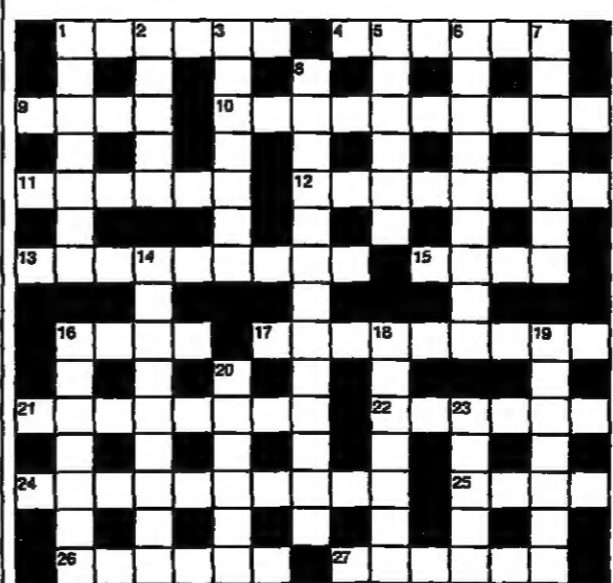


Leonard . . . cited by Scots

Match report, page 12

Guardian Crossword No 20,591

Set by Crispa



Across
1 Look through specially-designed arches (6)
4 Personal support given with a certain hesitation (5)
9 Beautiful stone work by a trainee (4)

Down
1 Fancy having a little drink with model (7)
2 A levy raised and deal arranged (5)
3 Box fitted under vehicle body (7)
5 Serving men accompanied by prior set forth (6)
6 Men hope an error can be found, but they're exceptional (9)
7 Go on about a race coming to a beastly end (3-4)



WINNERS OF PRIZE PUZZLE 20,584
This week's winners of a Collins English Dictionary are W. A. Rankin of Walsford, Hertfordshire, K. Walters of Chichester, West Sussex, Mrs. Irene Holden of Hebdon Bridge, West Yorkshire, Mrs. P. Doubleday of Ringmer, East Sussex, and R. Armstrong, of Norpeth Northumberland.

8 Moving work in the theatre never performed by thespians (5-8)
14 Of course Alan truly reformed (9)
16 Most imaginative and most satisfactory housing for the aged (7)
18 Complaint made when seed is a dud (7)
19 Last offer (4,3)
20 Masked female embracing one - divine (6)
23 Lake providing refuge for many a blackbird (5)

Solution tomorrow
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Major is again in Hong Kong. But with only 484 days left before the five-starred red flag of the People's Republic of China ousts the Union Jack, most magnates have found more fruitful ways to spend both their time and their money.